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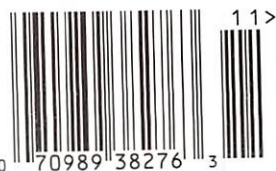
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FEATURES

68 THE P.O.V. 100 BEST WEB SITES

By Allan Hoffman

The dizzying growth of the Web means it's tougher than ever to get a handle on what's good. P.O.V.'s fourth annual ranking of the 100 best sites removes the guesswork. Here's the definitive list of the finest the Net has to offer.

PLUS: What terrible sites can teach you; the emergence of convergence; portal power; Internet appliances offering access for the next millennium.

74 DEBRA MESSING: GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

By Ian Williams

Debra Messing, the sensuous star of *Will & Grace*, can thank both her looks and her considerable talent for her rise to the top of the TV heap. But it's her brains that indicate her ascension has only just begun.

80 WHO'S REALLY RUNNING SILICON VALLEY?

By Lisa Margonelli

Help wanted: Young founders of hot Web start-up, who have no idea how to assemble an actual business, seek older (but still hip) chief executive to mold us into a real company. Gravitas, gray hair a plus. Apply within.

88 FLIRTY HARRY

By Jenn Shreve

You might talk a decent game, but great flirting is an art. Do it poorly, and you'll go home without a phone number, let alone a woman. From the opening statement to the closing proposition, here's assistance.

94 UNDERCOVER: LIFE WITH THE ARMY RANGERS

By Eric Blehm

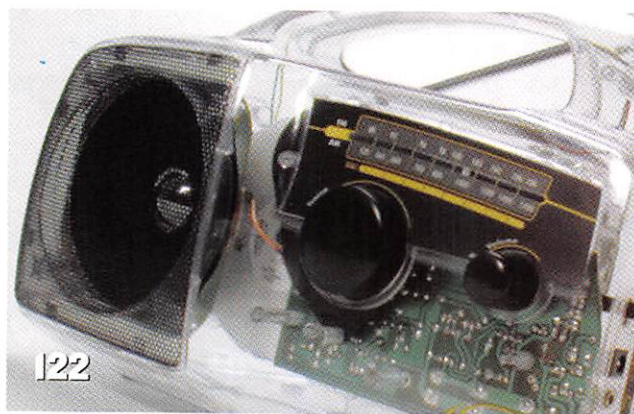
The Army Rangers are the world's toughest soldiers, a force whose very training missions sometimes turn deadly. Join one man's unprecedented peek behind the camouflage: with these guys, even *mock* war is hell.

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Sir Lancelot you're not, but when you select that modern armor known as a winter coat, it's helpful to keep the valorous essence of the knights of old in mind.

On the cover: Debra Messing photographed exclusively for P.O.V. by Mark Platt. Styled by Jennifer Lee. Hair by Campbell McAuley for Profile L.A. Makeup by Lutz for Profile L.A. Top by Barney's N.Y. Pants by Carla Dawn Behrle. This page: Dress by Marc Bouwer.





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Pet Project Critter coverage: providing insurance for Fido and Fluffy has made this entrepreneur a few bones of his own.

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He Did Go...All...the...Way ESPN's Dan Patrick: Dayton, Ohio; morning radio; unheated house. *En fuego?* Hardly.

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He Shoots, He Soars Sure, Tony Hawk is

the greatest skateboarder of all time. But how he's sustained his career might be his most impressive move of all.

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Buckeye football and a citywide party.

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Keep Your Eye on the Ball

It's like a disease. A good idea pops into an entrepreneur's head and takes over. It starts consuming the brain's bandwidth by debating the pros and cons of the business. By analyzing potential threats and opportunities.

Determining a game plan to get started. Thinking about financing it and getting a team together. Before you know it, the entrepreneur has an entire business ready to go.

The only problem is that he already has *another* business he's running that is still in the growth stage. If he pursues this new idea, his current company will pay dearly and he'll end up regretting it. It's been proven time and time again. New ideas and expansions of product lines are absolutely essential to growing a company. But timing is key.

Take, for example, *Wired* magazine. Louis Rossetto and Jane Metcalfe had one of the best media ideas of the early nineties. They had vision. And with their magazine, they are credited with helping launch the whole cool Internet culture. What made it even sweeter was that prior to their launching, every major publishing company and publishing venture capitalist had said "no dice" to investing. But Rossetto and Metcalfe managed to get it launched without the big boys, and it was a wild success. Until, that is, they took their eyes off the ball.

Rossetto and Metcalfe began launching international editions of the magazine. They launched their own book division, called HardWired, expanded into television, started a new Web business called HotWired—which, in itself, spawned several other new businesses. They started bleeding too much cash and had their fingers in too many pies. The company failed to go public twice, and it ended up closing a couple of divisions and selling the rest of the business in two parts. And during this entire debacle, another magazine, *Fast Company*, came in and stole much of *Wired*'s thunder. From an entrepreneurial standpoint, the saddest part is that Rossetto and Metcalfe lost control of their baby and are no longer involved with it.

Not only did the pair lose sight of their mission, they al-

so started believing their own hype—another fatal mistake for many entrepreneurs. You've got to stay humble while building your empire. That doesn't mean you don't scream from the rooftops about how great your product is. But you don't use hyperbole, and you spread the credit to the appropriate people. And you shouldn't scream raging success until you're actually profitable.

Mossimo is another example of a company that tried to expand too quickly. Designer Mossimo Giannulli built an incredible company based on beachwear: he had cool product and strong buzz among consumers. He went public and watched his net worth soar. Things were great and everything he had done up to that point was smart. But then he tried to expand into several other lines too quickly. From beachwear to suits, he was now selling it all.

The inevitable crash occurred, and the company hit hard times. Unlike Rossetto and Metcalfe, though, Giannulli re-trenched and retained control of his company. He brought in a new management team that is now turning his company around. He smartly learned his lesson.

At P.O.V., we've always tried to keep our eyes on the ball in growing our magazine to substantial circulation

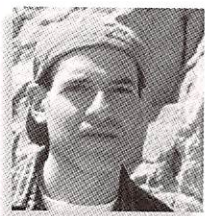
and profitability before taking on any other huge undertakings. Of course, we've launched affiliate products that help the revenue stream (such as our nightlife magazine, *Egg*, and an annual college career guide), but not another full division with another team. However, as we now approach our fifth anniversary with our April 2000 issue, we're near our goals and are ready to announce something new and big. So stay tuned. But in the meantime, please let us know how we're doing. Call (212-367-7600), fax (212-367-8289), write or e-mail me (dmassey@povmag.com).



Founder and President



Clutch Performers



Hoffman

Ten thousand sites a year. That's the damage done by **ALLAN HOFFMAN** in his twelve-month crusade to winnow out the best of the Web for our fourth annual P.O.V. 100. "It gets more fun each year," says Hoffman, 37, who has compiled our list since its inception. "Two or three years ago, it was all about ideas. Now, connections are fast enough to make those ideas useful. It's not about logging on because it's cool—these are just the best ways to do things now." It's a revolution we've been covering since the browser opened up the Internet, and there's no better guide to it than the P.O.V. 100. The list starts on page 68, and all the sites can be easily accessed from our own home on the Web, www.povmag.com.



Blehm

The military has its creeds, and aggressive journalism has one, too, which I've been known to repeat until I'm blue in the face: short of breaking laws or ethics, a great reporter should be willing to go to any lengths to bring home a great story. **ERIC BLEHM** lived that creed for his piece on the army's assassins, the Rangers. Blehm spent six months negotiating, cajoling and explaining in order to become the first journalist ever allowed to join the Rangers on their fabled training missions. Then Blehm—an avalanche-tested adventure writer who has written for *Outside* and *GQ*, and edited *TransWorld Snowboarding*—spent two months conditioning for the assignment. Nonetheless, the California native, whose previous military exposure consisted of shaving his head so that he could sneak into Camp Pendleton and surf its off-limits point, still came away with a broken body. "I will never watch CNN quite the same way again," says Blehm, 31. You can gain similar perspective—sans the severely bruised kidneys—by turning to page 94.



Corio

PAUL CORIO, a monthly P.O.V. contributor for two years, has known he was going to be an illustrator since his crayon days. But as he simultaneously pursues a career as an abstract painter, Corio, who also draws regularly for *Sports Illustrated* and *Newsweek*, has been adding a new dimension to his work. "Color is something I now think about a lot," says the 34-year-old, whose work has been influenced by George Grosz,

David Hockney and Henrick Drescher. His vibrant style can be seen in our Leading Off section, and in our feature on the resurgence of the gray-haired set in Silicon Valley.



P.O.V. Dream Team

Finally, I'd like to congratulate our **SOFTBALL TEAM** for something that doesn't happen often in the magazine pick-up league—a perfect season, 7–0. You can learn a lot about corporate culture from softball. We were trailing at one point or another in all seven games—we always came back. We were usually scrambling to get out of the office in time to play—we always fielded a full squad. We played three teams that were genuinely better than us (take a bow, *Rolling Stone*, *High Times* and *Forbes*)—and won all three games by just one run: two in our final at-bat, one when we were down to our last out. Hell, our shortstop played with a severed tendon in his hand—he wouldn't even have it checked out until the season was over. Clutch performances from a clutch staff...


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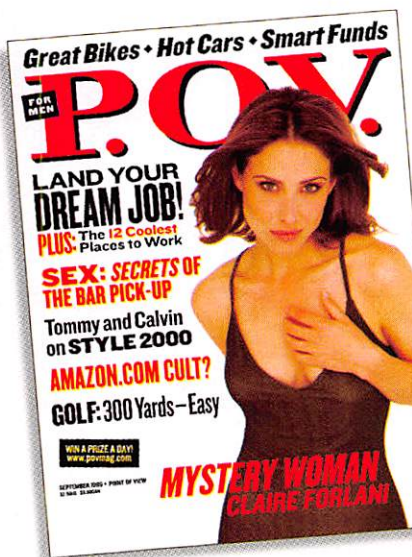
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The Cheeseman Cometh

YOUR SEPTEMBER P.O.V. UNDER-cover article, "I, Cheesasaurus," was a total riot. It took me nearly an hour to read, because I just couldn't stop laughing. Your writer, Carl Kozlowski, brilliantly described how every shred of dignity was stripped of him for a few bucks. You have a terrific magazine here—keep going with what works.

Darel McCormick
San Juan, Puerto Rico

POINT OF RETURN...



PLAYING HARDBALL Sure, Brian Cashman had just scored the dream job of many a 30-year-old male—general manager of the New York Yankees. But when we profiled him in May 1998, he told us that he had rejected the first offer from owner George Steinbrenner, a two-year deal at \$150,000 a season, gambling that a one-year contract could prove sweeter if he performed well. Bold, considering that Cashman is the fifteenth Yankee GM since Steinbrenner bought the team in 1973. And smart, too: the Yankees went on to their greatest season ever, and Cashman signed a new three-year pact for a reported \$1.1 million. "I'm younger than most GMs," Cashman explains, "but we all have the same pressures, and the same expectations."

Now firmly entrenched in the House That Ruth Built, Cashman appears to have better standing than any executive of Steinbrenner's tenure. "I wouldn't say I'm confident," Cashman shrugs. "I make recommendations to Mr. Steinbrenner and sometimes he accepts them and sometimes he doesn't." With the Yankees nicely positioned, as of press time, to make a run at another World Series title, Cashman's dream job may once again help prove a dream come true for the Bronx Bomber faithful.

—Ben Kaplan

Bad Company

REGARDING YOUR RANKING OF TOP companies to work for ("The Dynamic Dozen," September), the work that you have done seems somewhat accurate. But you don't take into account how those companies deal with workers whose firms have been acquired. These people will give you some real insight into how the companies treat employees. My best friend was let go from one of your top twelve companies. I would put their ability up against that of anyone left—and what really sets me off is that their spouse had terminal cancer. Factoring these things in might cause you to alter your list.

Mike Miller
via the Internet

The Road to Nowhere

I JUST READ THE ARTICLE "DEATH OF a Minor Rock 'N' Roll Band" (September) and know that The Caddyskins story is sad, but true. I've been managing an alternative band for quite some time and relate to the hard knocks. The music industry makes it difficult for a peon like me to help a deserving artist succeed. The "next big thing" in music should not be shoved down our throats, or be influenced by a powerful music promoter.

Jennica M. Campeau
St. Charles, Michigan



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Alternate Route

SNIDE, SELF-CENTERED and condescending. Jennifer Rosen and her friends ("The Bar Code," September) make a great case for going to church to meet women.

Joe Parnell
Juneau, Alaska

Broadening Our Options Abroad

I RECENTLY READ YOUR ARTICLE ABOUT the new hot spots to go international and hit it big ("All Abroad!," August). I found them interesting and worth considering. But where was Warsaw? Poland holds the most foreign direct investment of all former Eastern Bloc countries, and has done so for the past few years. The second-largest investor in Poland is the United States.

Additionally, economists and politicians applaud Warsaw's stability both politically and economically. The only things Budapest, which you cited, has over Warsaw are Old World beauty and friendliness (the Hungarians have a demonstrated penchant for partying). Poles certainly come off as gruff, but the younger capitalist class is more open and ready to make a deal.

Nicholas Garwolinski
New Haven, Connecticut

GREAT ARTICLE BY JOHN FRIED ABOUT the next booming cities in the world. I was surprised not to see any Brazilian cities included on the list, however, especially when talking technology. The development of the Internet has been more apparent in Brazil than in any other country in Latin America. With the newest alliance signed by Microsoft and Organizacoes Globo, the perspectives could not be better. It's important to realize that more than a third of the inhabitants of the region speak Portuguese, not Spanish, and that huge chunk of the market should never be overlooked.

Danielle M. Duran
New York

MAILBOX

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ALL ABROAD!

Sure, the American economy is the envy of the planet. But there's ample opportunity—and ample adventure—to be had across the globe. Take them on the heels of the 1990s, change in the world, and by high-tech, we've identified EIGHT WONDERS OF THE WORLD FOR THE NEXT DECADE. Grab your passport and come to get on the international scene. BY JOHN FRIED. ILLUSTRATION BY GARY PETERSON.



E-kudos

I'VE BEEN A SUBSCRIBER SINCE 1996, yet this is the first time I've browsed your Web site. I appreciate the magazine for many reasons: the useful information and reviews for products and services that don't seem geared toward someone with a seven-figure salary. I am in the financial services field and appreciate the usefulness and clarity of the investment advice as well. As I browsed the site, I saw the same qualities, and decided to send a message of both thanks and appreciation.

James L. Macias
via the Internet

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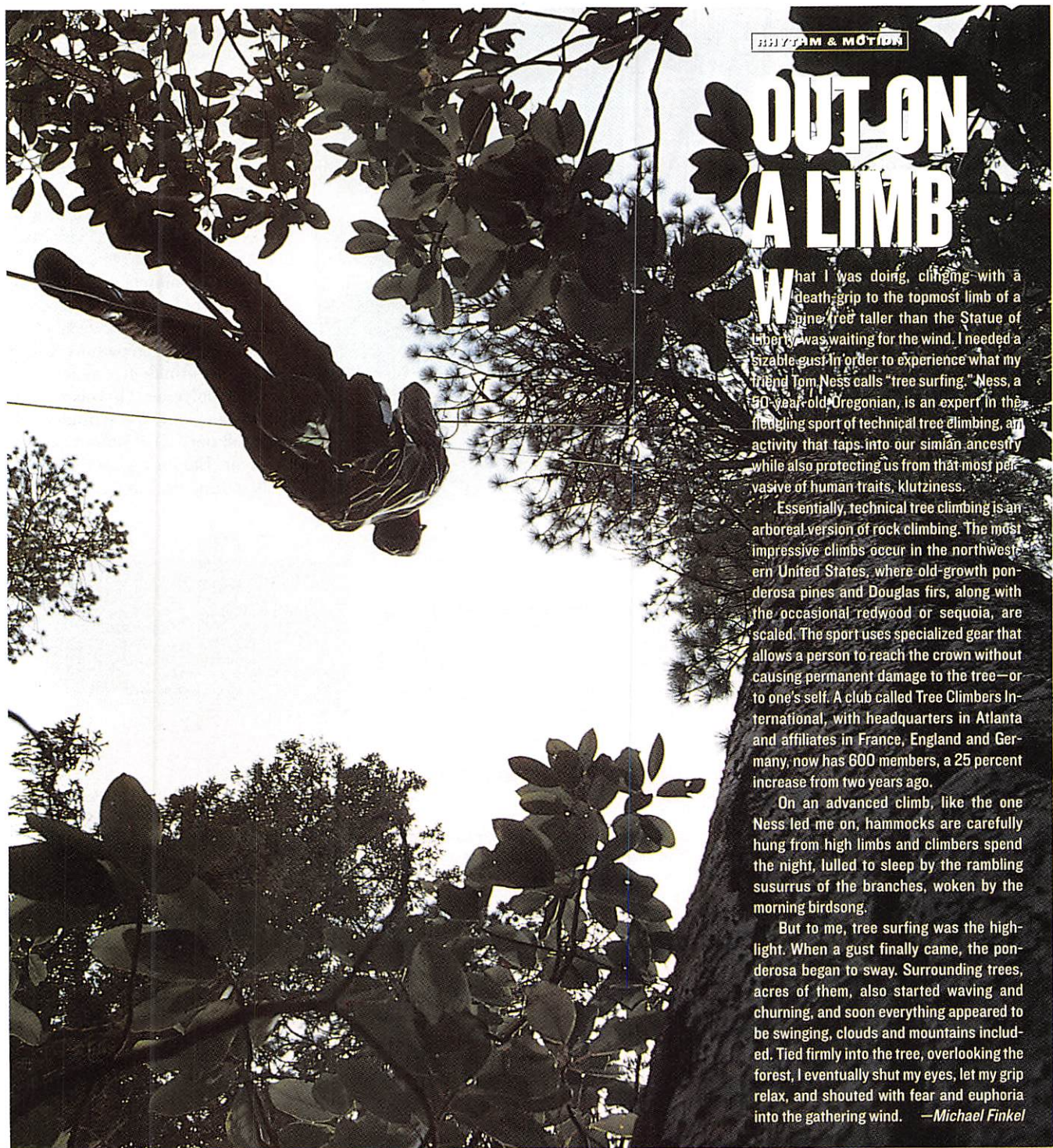
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LEADING OFF

NOTES & QUOTES. DEALS & DISH. FLICKS & PICKS.



RHYTHM & MOTION

OUT ON A LIMB

What I was doing, clinging with a death grip to the topmost limb of a pine tree taller than the Statue of Liberty, was waiting for the wind. I needed a sizable gust in order to experience what my friend Tom Ness calls "tree surfing." Ness, a 50-year-old Oregonian, is an expert in the fledgling sport of technical tree climbing, an activity that taps into our simian ancestry while also protecting us from that most pervasive of human traits, klutziness.

Essentially, technical tree climbing is an arboreal version of rock climbing. The most impressive climbs occur in the northwestern United States, where old-growth ponderosa pines and Douglas firs, along with the occasional redwood or sequoia, are scaled. The sport uses specialized gear that allows a person to reach the crown without causing permanent damage to the tree—or to one's self. A club called Tree Climbers International, with headquarters in Atlanta and affiliates in France, England and Germany, now has 600 members, a 25 percent increase from two years ago.

On an advanced climb, like the one Ness led me on, hammocks are carefully hung from high limbs and climbers spend the night, lulled to sleep by the rambling susurrrus of the branches, woken by the morning birdsong.

But to me, tree surfing was the highlight. When a gust finally came, the ponderosa began to sway. Surrounding trees, acres of them, also started waving and churning, and soon everything appeared to be swinging, clouds and mountains included. Tied firmly into the tree, overlooking the forest, I eventually shut my eyes, let my grip relax, and shouted with fear and euphoria into the gathering wind. —Michael Finkel

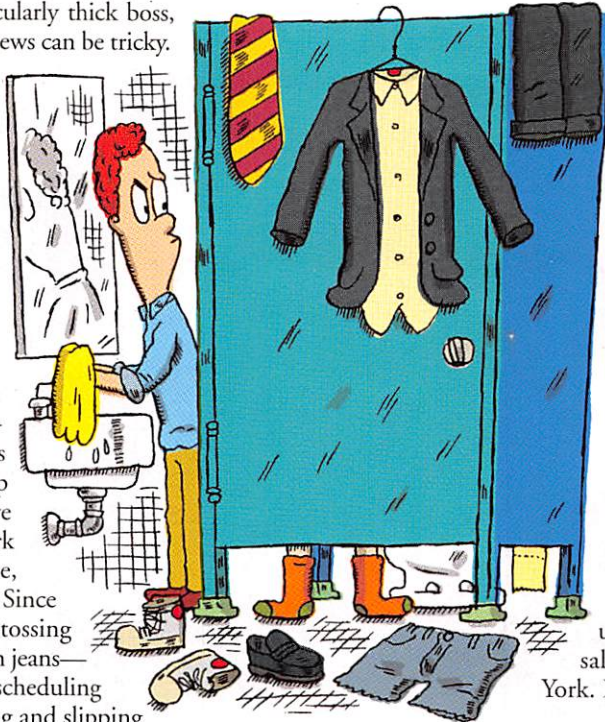
ANNE SHERWOOD

TICKER Check out the Web site of Atlanta-based **TREE CLIMBERS INTERNATIONAL** at www.treeclimbing.com, where you can read the tree

Q: How Can I Sneak Out to a Job Interview Without Raising Suspicion?

A: Unless you have a particularly thick boss, slipping off to job interviews can be tricky. After all, claiming you have a dentist appointment doesn't quite wash when you're wearing a gray three-button. The recent rise of the "corporate casual" look complicates things: wearing khakis and pullovers to work is great—until you need to put on a suit.

But with a little legwork, you can explore that next opportunity without earning the Disgruntled Employee tag at your current workplace. Start by wearing suit pants and a dress shirt all day—then slip into the tie and jacket once you've left the office. Of course, if you work in a torn-jeans-dirty-T-shirt place, you'll have to be a bit more cagey. Since downgrading your outfit—i.e., tossing your suit into a bag and throwing on jeans—is a lot easier than upgrading it, try scheduling your interviews early in the morning and slipping



into work a little late.

For midday appointments, tap friends who live or work near the interview site, drop off your suit in the morning and then change there before the interview. As a last resort, leave your suit in your car or in a hidden corner of your office, and do your Superman-like quick change in a public restroom en route. But beware: no matter how skilled a folder you are, suits don't do well in gym bags. "It's got to be hung," says Mary Lou Andre, editor of *Dressing Well*.

If you absolutely have to pull your suit out of a bag, consider wool crepe. Nearly every upscale label offers a line of wool crepe suits, which are about as wrinkle-free as anything that's not polyester. "If you hang it for even an hour, the wrinkles will usually fall out," says James Lubak, a salesman at Bloomingdale's in New York. If only scoring the job were so easy.

—Eric Grode

MEN @ WORK

PINCH HITTER

John Ralph, 33, spends his days chatting with living baseball legends, collecting artifacts from historic games and writing plaque inscriptions for the likes of Nolan Ryan. Such is the life of the director of communications for the National Baseball Hall of Fame of Cooperstown, New York. Just a baseball's throw from his office are Babe Ruth's bowling ball, Christy Mathewson's grand piano and a Lou Gehrig scrapbook lovingly assembled by his wife, Eleanor. For Ralph—himself a former NCAA Division III All-American at Illinois Wesleyan—life's a grand slam.

—Stuart Wade

WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE YOU'VE HAD?

The Mark McGwire-Sammy Sosa home-run race was unforgettable, because I was assigned to follow Sosa throughout September. He gave me his bat and jersey from the 66th home run. I took them directly to the airport. I got back and was met by a

camera crew. We walked down Main Street in Cooperstown at 2 AM carrying the artifacts into the Hall of Fame.

WHAT IS THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL PART OF YOUR JOB?

We field several calls a day regarding Pete Rose and Joe Jackson. Their supporters are passionate that Rose and Jackson should be inducted. It's a common opinion, but unfortunately it has little to do with us. It's really up to the commissioner to start that process.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE TASK?

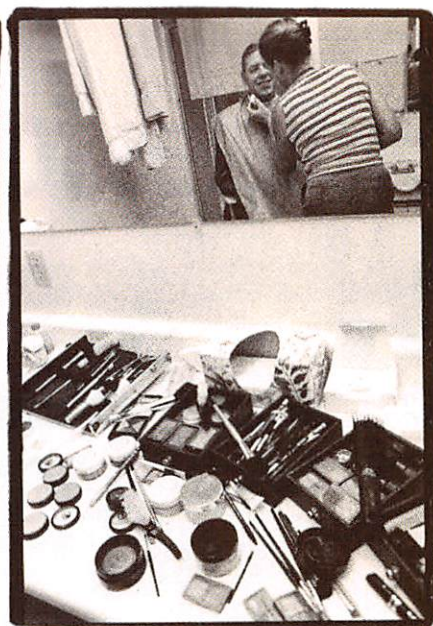
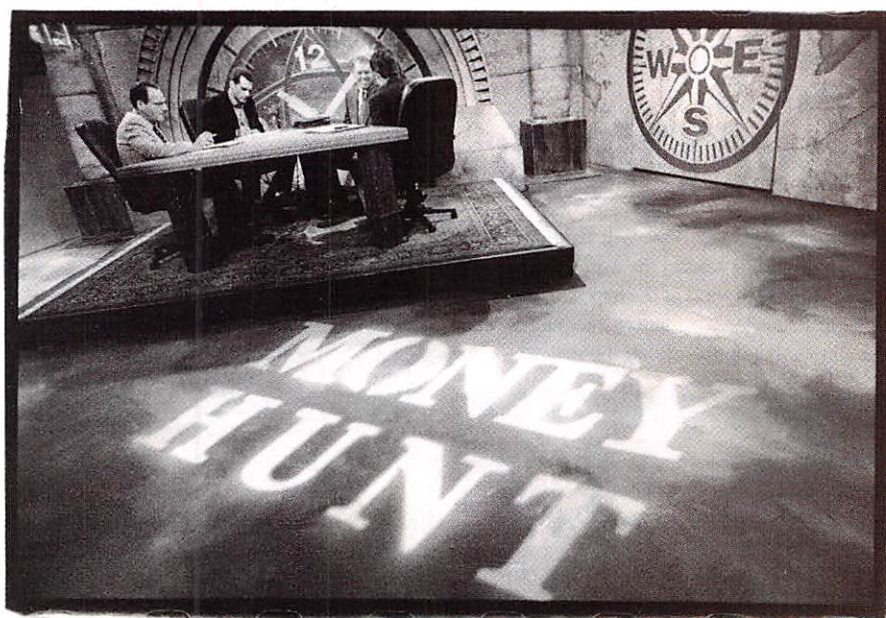
During the Veterans Committee meeting each March it is my responsibility to sit with Ted Williams and keep him informed of which player is being discussed—his hearing isn't so good. I keep him involved in the process, put the relevant players' stats at his fingertips and enable him to voice



his opinion at the appropriate time. I consider it a huge privilege sitting next to whom I believe to be the greatest hitter who ever lived. Having worked in public relations for the Rangers and the White Sox, I grew to be fairly unaffected being around ballplayers. But when you're sitting next to Ted Williams, that changes everything.

PAUL CORIO (P.O.V. Q&A)

climber's code of ethics and also score tips on getting cats out of high branches....Some of the early names bandied about as possibilities for



GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

In the Money

They come, they schmooze, they sweat.

They're entrepreneurs like Braun Mincher, 26, a slick strawberry blond from Fort Collins, Colorado, who's about to have his business plan simultaneously skewered and praised as he competes on *Money Hunt*, a weekly half-hour show on PBS. His mission: to defend his vision for TeamCellular.com, a Web site that will peddle cell-phone accessories. His competition: Christopher Karl, 28, co-founder of CarePackages.com, a Fairfield, Connecticut-based firm that sells and ships customizable care packages via the Web.

Money Hunt has been compared to everything from *The Gong Show* to *The People's*

Court. In reality, the show packs the frenzy of *The McLaughlin Group*. The set in Norwalk, Connecticut, is little more than a glorified conference room. No money is won—just some free consultation with a venture capitalist/mentor. But the young businessmen here today were raised on the boob tube—they know that fifteen minutes of fame can make all the difference. "I put \$3 million of my own money into this company," admits Rick Swanson, 33, of Austin-based FreeMe.com, a site that allows users to access multiple software applications. "Do I need to be here? No. But it doesn't hurt to put our name out there."

As confidence is key, no one admits that he's nervous. "Don't let these guys fool you,"

grins cohost Cliff Ennico, an attorney and small-business venture capitalist. "It's like a duck. He looks like he's gliding along, but we all know he's paddling like mad underneath." Ennico, cohost/investment banker Miles Spencer and today's mentor, venture capitalist Niles Cohen, are like sharks with calming smiles, waiting for blood in the form of illogical growth strategies or overly verbose, oblique presentations.

Without socks, but with plenty of poise, Karl bests Mincher for the prize of quality time with Cohen. But Mincher isn't defeated. He's made TeamCellular's name known to PBS fans from as far afield as Waco, Texas, and Bangor, Maine. Besides, he says, "It's a great opportunity to get my feet wet in learning about getting financing."

That's a take. Now it's back to the real business world. —Heather Bourbeau



THE THRILL OF VENTURE:

(clockwise, from bottom right)
The view to a grill; Karl (left) and Mincher appraise the competition; Mincher goes money grubbing; dressed for the kill.

LINDA ROSIER

MONEY HUNT: The Entrepreneur Information Exchange; Capital Quest; and the unwieldy *The Patron Saint of All Entrepreneurs*....Later immortal-

THE END IS NEAR

Bubbles for Everyone

Who cares about the damn computers? You've probably heard the rumor about the other disaster predicted to coincide with the dawn of the millennium: the

Champagne shortage that will paralyze New Year's Eve revelers around the world. We here at Party Central got wind of the hype and, frankly, thought it smelled a bit like marketing bait designed to make bubbly fly off the shelves.

NEW YEAR'S SCENARIO	DREAM BUBBLY	REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE
Richard Avedon invites you over for an exclusive "Models for the Millennium" party	Champagne Piper "Gaultier Corset" Bottle (the man who retooled Madonna's headlights now dresses up Piper-Heidsieck bottles in red negligee) \$100	Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte Brut Rosé Premier Cru, wrapped in a pair of purloined panties \$30
Your former fraternity brothers want to celebrate once more... for old time's sake	Champagne Krug's "Ultimate Six-Pack," complete with six half-bottles of Krug Grande Cuvée \$310	Domaine Ste. Michelle Cuvée Brut from Washington State, a perennial crowd pleaser \$14
The Barbi Twins invite you and your best bud over for a double whammy	Champagne Taittinger's "Millennium" magnum, a double-bottle beauty best shared by four \$175	Domaine Carneros "Le Rêve" (by Taittinger), one of California's best bubblys \$30
The aging beauties from <i>Absolutely Fabulous</i> invite you to their London flat	Bollie, of course: Bollinger R.D. 1981 (an aged Champ that's been maturing for nineteen years) \$190	Freixenet Cava from Spain, an old favorite priced to drink \$12
You're proposing on the big night, but the Dom Pérignon, Grande Dame and Cristal are gone when you arrive at the store the morning of the 31 st .	You're screwed	Go for their little brothers: Domaine Chandon Cuvée Brut, Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label or Roederer NV Brut \$35



An urgent call to the director of the Champagne Wines Information Bureau, Jean-Louis Carbonnier, revealed that the predictions are indeed "very peculiar." The problem isn't that there won't be enough Champagne to go around, but that there probably won't be enough of the top, top stuff—Dom Pérignon, Cristal, Veuve Clicquot's Grande Dame—both because of increased demand and rumor-driven hoarding.

"If there's a top brand that you simply must have, don't wait until the last minute," Carbonnier warns. For those of you willing to spend at least a hundred bucks a bottle, move now or suffer the wrath of your high-maintenance girlfriend. For the rest of us, however, there should be plenty of bubbly priced around \$30 a pop for the big night. Clip our chart and head to the nearest booze bazaar at your convenience. Just don't wait til the 31st; each store has its own inventory issues. Wait and you just might be stuck buying Champagne.

—Anthony Giglio

SAGE WISDOM

ASK BERT

Bert, she is good-looking. I am chubby (and not rich). I can't get over the question, "What is someone this gorgeous doing with me?" How do I shake this inferiority complex?

—S.G., Philadelphia

Everyone has been in love with someone he thought was too good for him and maybe should be looking further up the food chain. Perhaps it's just that she's not aware she's dating you. Or she's dating you because she's too lazy to consider suicide. But before you go through a nonentity crisis, remember this: nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent. So just enjoy it. And her.

Bert, I can only spare one day a weekend for football. Should it be a Keith Jackson Saturday or a John Madden Sunday?

—P.S., Detroit

Whoa, Nellie. I hate to be the one to break the news, but Keith Jackson has largely retired from the national scene. (And, just in case you also missed

it, Abe Lincoln is still dead.) Nevertheless, your question has less to do with which announcer to listen to than your football "druther": collegiate or pro. I prefer the collegiate brand, where the action is every 25 seconds, as opposed to pro ball, where the plays—and the commercials—come every 30.

You can get your pro fix during the week at John Madden's Web site, www.foxsports.com/allmadden, where you can also get his recipe for his lard-filled tamales. The spicy dish proves almost as flavorful as his commentary.

Bert, my girlfriend and I have only been together for a month, but I want to cinch New Year's plans now. Too pushy?

—E.M., Albuquerque, New Mexico

If not now, when? I've seen more nerve in a tooth. In the words of Billy Eckstine: "Maybe it's too early in the game/so here comes the jackpot question just the same/what are you doing New Year's/New Year's Eve?" So go ahead and ask. Now! Otherwise you may be reduced to staying up til midnight to watch your hopes drop.

Have a question that needs answering? Be brave, man! E-mail P.O.V.'s depository of information, Bert Sugar, at bert@povmag.com.



ized by his eponymous high-grade bubbly, French cellar-dweller Dom Pérignon pioneered the art of **CHAMPAGNE** making in 1697...FreshMade

TEST DRIVE

JERKY, BOYS?

Not content with mere cultural ubiquity or having its former ruffians elected to high political office, the World Wrestling

Federation is now lending its distinguished imprimatur to the processed-meat industry, with the introduction of WWF Attitude Meat Snack, a jerky-like stick that promises to take your taste buds off the top rope and, later, deliver a crushing choke hold to your digestive tract. Attitude Meat Snack, in original or teriyaki flavor, contains ostrich, "the other red meat," which is leaner than beef and probably the tastiest flightless bird over six feet tall.

Nonetheless, Attitude is barging in on a crowded field, led by the rival World Championship Wrestling and its preferred meat-like snack, Slim Jim. How does the WWF's meat rate? We slathered our stomachs with a protective coat of Pepto and entered the ring.

—Brian Dawson

SNACK: SLIM JIM GIANT SLIM

THE HOOK: The pride of the WCW, Slim Jim is an American classic whose "eat me!" ad tag line reflects its brash, everyguy nature.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: Bare-bones and straightforward, the humble Slim Jim is a dignified addition to the snack rack at your local carryout...

ON THE PALATE: ...but that's just where you ought to

leave it. One of Jim's ingredients is "mechanically separated chicken," and it seems said bird's lower intestine forms the stick's ghastly outer casing.

JIM'S INTERIOR LOOKS AND TASTES LIKE SOMETHING THE CAT COUGHED UP.

REF'S RULING: Booo! Points for its noble gentility, but major deductions for its vile taste. Jim rates a slim 3.

SNACK: ROLETS BIG BEEF CHEVY

THE HOOK: In what seems a sop to vegetarians, this unpleasant food object contains "soy protein concentrate." Also beef lips...but let's not think about that.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: Its uniformity of texture and color scream "synthetic," and this stick is as dense as Ric Flair's neck.

ON THE PALATE: It tastes better than it looks, blessedly, although that's not saying much. It's not greasy (rare in a meat stick, as connoisseurs are aware) and is chewy enough to be marketed as meat-flavored taffy.

REF'S RULING: The downmarket alternative for those not quite ready for the sophistication of, say, Slim Jim. Scores a generous 4.

SNACK: TILLAMOOK COUNTRY SMOKER PEPPERED BEEF JERKY

THE HOOK: Ground black pepper and garlic powder combine to give this craggy customer a wallop.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: An "Ever Fresh Oxygen Remover" comes entombed in every cellophane pack to make sure your jerky stays as arid as possible. Forget next year—this could be your Y2K emergency food.

ON THE PALATE: Hotter than July. This is the real deal: grizzled and chewy, with plenty of kick. Wild thirst will ensue; keep plenty of beer on hand.

REF'S RULING: An 8 for its piquant odor, impressive topography and lingering flavor. Eat this stuff today and you'll still be tasting it at Christmas.

SNACK: WWF ATTITUDE MEAT SNACK (TERIYAKI FLAVOR)

THE HOOK: The lean ostrich gives this stick 60 percent lower fat content than Slim Jim's Giant Slim.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:

Its length. Clearly aiming to take down the Giant Slim, the Attitude Meat Snack is a full thirteen inches of greasy mayhem.

ON THE PALATE: The first bite is about as pleasant as a whiff of Steve Austin's undies after a Texas death match. But give it a few chews and the smooth ostrich flavor (it tastes like a bigger, faster chicken) kicks into full effect.

REF'S RULING: It puts the Slim Jim in a permanent sleeper hold. Give the big dumb bird a 9. If you're such a health geek that even your processed meat needs to toe the line, Attitude is the way to go.

SNACK: PACIFIC GOLD TERIYAKI TURKEY JERKY

THE HOOK: The sheer fortitude of its main ingredient: "The poultry contained herein is...derived from birds that received ante- and postmortem inspection and were found sound and healthy."

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES: Neither long stick nor flat slab, these bite-sized morsels offer just enough jerky goodness to keep you craving more—a rare feat in this food group.

ON THE PALATE: Pleasantly chewy, this stuff is completely absent of preservatives—and it shows. Pacific Gold Turkey Jerky actually tastes like food; it's the least likely of the lot to send you into the fetal position.

REF'S RULING: You may feel like a sissy eating it, but your colon will still respect you in the morning. A flawless 10.



Meat Products out of San Diego offers the Y2K-ready "Final Frontier" **BEEF JERKY**: ten lip-smacking pounds for only \$125....In 71 A.D., emperor

THE KILLER APP

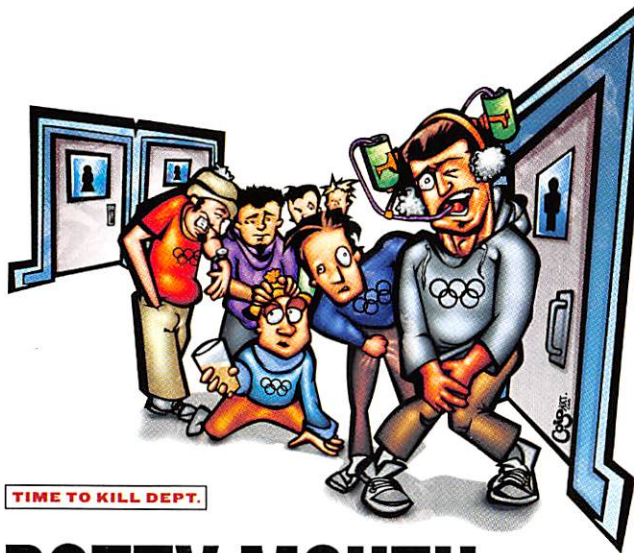
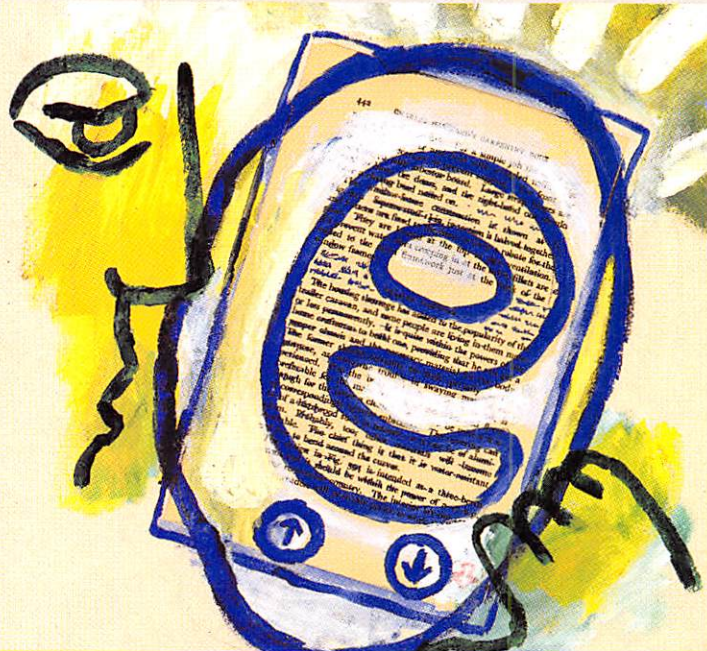
Booked for the Future

Portable, digital and surprisingly readable, the **ROCKET eBook** (\$499, www.rocket-ebook.com) may be the digital device that finally makes it into your bathroom. A 3-by-4½-inch LCD screen is framed by a smooth, curving gray shell, giving the electronic book holder the look and feel of a hydrocephalic PalmPilot. After booting up eBook software, you go to www.barnesandnoble.com to download your choice of a few hundred electronic books. For the price of a regular novel, suck down the digital version—including any black-and-white illustrations—and transfer it to the eBook. In all, the eBook can store up to 4,000 pages (or one David Foster Wallace novel).

Seems impersonal? Nope, the eBook cuddles snugly into your palm. Using your thumb, click either an up or down scroll button to weave through the text. Like to scribble deep thoughts in the margins? There's a note-taking tool that lets you augment the text; just click a section of a paragraph, and a window comes up where, using a painfully Lilliputian on-screen keyboard, you can type in comments and mark them for future reference. There's also a dictionary tool for quick clicking on any word that demands defining (what does Lilliputian mean, anyway?).

The bad news: the screen gets a bit of a glare, so it's not ideal for that trip to Antigua. As well, for now, the title list remains pretty small. But these things are here to stay. Yes, the device might seem alien, but, at one time, so did telephones, microwaves and vibrators. Eventually, the good gizmos work their way into everyday life. Think of the eBook as Lite-Brite literature for the Pong generation.

—David Kushner



TIME TO KILL DEPT.

POTTY MOUTH

Being a man used to mean never having to wait in line to pee. How we laughed at our sisters, girlfriends and mothers when, at the ballgame, we'd unburden our bladders and drink two more beers in the time it took them to move to the front of a restroom line proceeding at the speed of Kabuki theater.

Laugh no more, toilet boy, because the times they are a-changin'. Rice-Eccles Stadium, on the campus of the University of Utah, recently underwent a wholesale reconstruction in preparation for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2002 "Will \$2 million in small bills be sufficient?" Winter Olympics. Stadium planners, in an effort to rectify the bathroom imbalance found at most other public venues, went hog-wild with the ladies' loos—the redesigned complex now has two women's restrooms for every men's. Pabst-bloated guys face lines longer than congressional hearings. The solution to this tedium? Chat with your neighbor—the fairer sex does it all the time. When next you find yourself at a sporting event waiting for a pissoir to free up, simply tap the guy in front of you and commence gabbing. It's fun! It's friendly! It might get you assaulted! Here are some conversation starters.

—Brian Dawson

TOPIC: The line itself

SUGGESTED OPENING REMARK: "If this lasts much longer, I'm donning a dress and going next door. You in?"

TOPIC: The weather

SUGGESTED OPENING REMARK: "Is it humid in here, or have I wet myself again?"

TOPIC: Sports

SUGGESTED OPENING REMARK: "Hey, if the game goes into overtime, can you save me a spot back here?"

TOPIC: Women

SUGGESTED OPENING REMARK: "I don't really have to go. I just come in here periodically to escape my nagging girlfriend. Whatcha doing later?"

TOPIC: Global affairs

SUGGESTED OPENING REMARK: "Is this the line to the Macedonian border?"

Vespasian erected the first **PUBLIC RESTROOM** in recorded history in Rome. The mammoth loo offered an extensive plumbing network complete

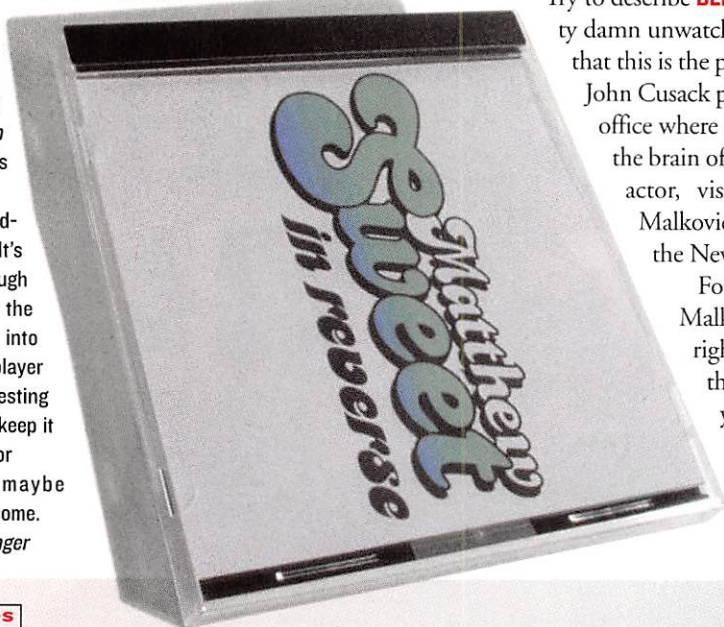
TUNES

HOW SWEET IT IS

In 1991, **MATTHEW SWEET** released one of the decade's most important records, *Girlfriend*. Sweet's four follow-up efforts, however, were mostly uncommercial affairs that seemed destined to doom him to cult-hero status. He was celebrated for his ambition and songwriting brilliance—but dismissed as a one-album-wonder nonetheless.

Well, make that a two-album wonder, because Sweet's latest, *In Reverse*, is a watershed recording. It's all here: deceptively simple songwriting, complex melodies and letter-perfect instrumentation. And while the record's title, psychedelic undertones and experimental aspects (a live seventeen-piece band, anyone?) may open the door for comparisons to the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, *In Reverse* is still thoroughly modern pop. It's catchy enough to get off the radio and into your CD player and interesting enough to keep it in there for months—maybe years—to come.

—Andy Langer

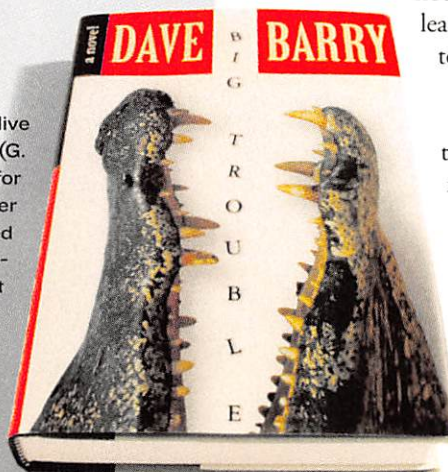


READS

Barry Funny

Somewhere on the unhinged side of Elmore Leonard's *Get Shorty* live the busy characters in Dave Barry's frantic debut novel, **BIG TROUBLE** (G. P. Putnam's, \$23.95). Barry, the Pulitzer Prize-winning funnyman for the *Miami Herald*, is in crazy uncharted waters here with his caper farce involving a few folks in Coconut Grove, Florida: a drifter named Puggy; a pretty housekeeper named Nina; her horny jerk of an employer, Mr. Herk; the investigating cops; a newsman-turned-publicist named Eliot Arnold; his teenage son, Matt; and a couple of hit squads—one with real guns, the other with SquirtMasters.

Moving deftly into Leonard's genre, Barry executes the mechanics of the screwball criminal plot with surprising skill. Of course, his characters talk like, well, Dave Barry: alternately wacky and deadpan. But there's nothing wrong with that. Barry, once again, has succeeded in laughing all the way to the bank. —Nathan Ward



French teacher. (Wouldn't you?) If you're looking for tips on handling the apocalypse with style, this is the film for you.

—John Elsassner

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Cameron Diaz is funny (and funny-looking) in *Being John Malkovich*.

FLICKS

Body for Hire

Try to describe **BEING JOHN MALKOVICH**, and it winds up sounding pretty damn unwatchable. So you'll just have to trust us when we tell you that this is the plot of perhaps the year's most oddly appealing movie: John Cusack plays a depressed puppeteer who begins temping in an office where he discovers a hidden portal that leads directly inside the brain of Malkovich. For fifteen minutes, unbeknownst to the actor, visitors can experience what it's like to be John Malkovich—and then they are safely ejected onto the side of the New Jersey Turnpike. Still with us?

For added realism, John Malkovich is played by... John Malkovich. And Cameron Diaz is hilarious (if not downright unrecognizable) as Cusack's dorky wife, who fills their apartment with assorted animals. Could we tell you more confusing stuff about this ingenious film? Sure. But like we said, you'll just have to trust us.

ALSO WORTH SEEING: Only six hours remain until the end of the world! What to do? Call Bruce Willis? Not if you're in **LAST NIGHT**, a wry film from director Don McKellar that follows a group of folks passing their final

hours on earth. As the lead, McKellar (it pays to know the director) seeks solitude. His buddy, meanwhile, tries to sleep with as many women as possible, including his former high school

with urinals and flush toilets....The now-svelte **JOHN MALKOVICH** lost 70 pounds in ten weeks during high school by adhering to a Jell-O diet.

At first, the tale of entrepreneurship told by Vincent Pan and Darin McKeever sounds like it's going to be yet another rags-to-riches saga ending with an IPO jackpot. The partners started their business, Heads Up, out of their cramped apartment in 1996. "The place had no sunlight, which was fine if you had another job," jokes Pan, 26. "Furniture consisted of milk crates with shelves going across them, plus my laptop and printer." They drained their savings accounts and dined on food-cart hot dogs grabbed on

where Hiatt sat on the advisory board of the after-school organization then headed by Pan. "They demonstrate a kind of leadership that is rare both in the nonprofit world and in the for-profit world," Hiatt says of the pair. "I knew if they could somehow get over the difficult [start-up] period, they were going to succeed."

Since day one, Pan and McKeever have been determined to do more than set up a rote after-school literacy class. Instead, they've created something designed to make life changes. Heads Up targets the capital's most needy students (the average household income is about \$10,000, and test scores fall in the city's bottom quartile), providing free tutoring five days a week during the school year, an eight-week summer session and personal consultations with parents. The 200 tutors come from local universities and AmeriCorps, which covers one-third of the program's budget. And unlike other literacy programs, Heads Up requires all the children in a family to enroll. "We can make a bigger impact on the children when they are working with their siblings," McKeever explains.

Heads Up is now housed in a spacious, carpeted office filled with real furniture and PCs. Pan laughs as he strolls through the office, reminiscing about that basement apartment in Dupont Circle where this all

Class Act

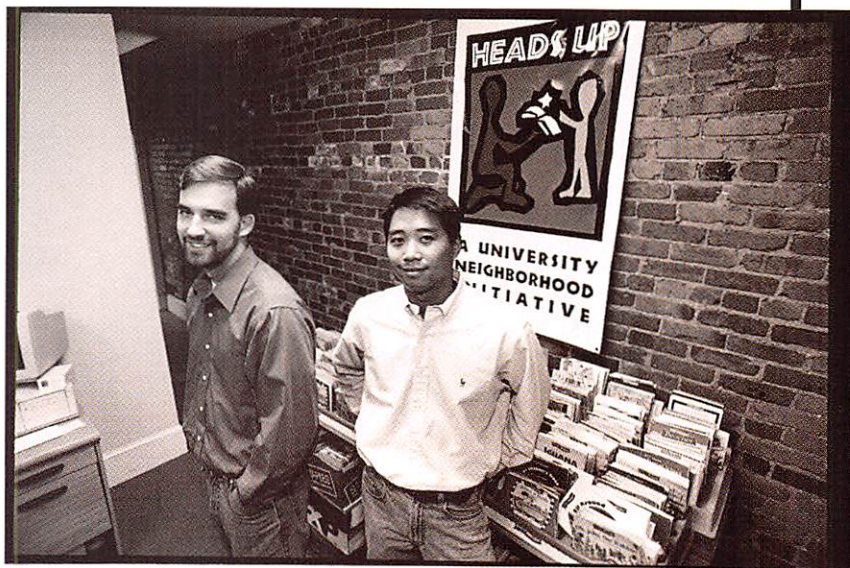
While their Harvard classmates flocked to Wall Street, Vincent Pan and Darin McKeever struck it rich in a different way. BY LAN NGUYEN

the run. But here's the twist: Heads Up is a nonprofit, offering tutoring for kids in Washington, D.C.'s most destitute neighborhoods.

In the nonprofit world, the "riches" part of the rags-to-riches story is all about winning grants—money that allows the companies to do their good work—and on that score Pan and McKeever have already hit it big. They've gone from subsisting on a \$15,000 fellowship, which helped them tutor at three elementary schools, to raising more than \$800,000 annually—enough to establish a full-fledged literacy program for 400 grade-schoolers.

Pan and McKeever never planned to work in the nonprofit arena. The middle son of Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants, Pan wanted to live out the American Dream with a high-paying job on Wall Street; McKeever, born to a lawyer and an educator, thought his future would be in academia. But after the two met at Harvard and volunteered together for an after-school program serving underprivileged children, they reassessed their futures. "This work was a conscious lifestyle decision," says McKeever, 25. "It is our calling."

Arnold Hiatt, chairman of the philanthropic arm of the Stride Rite shoe company, was impressed enough with the pair's dedication to kick in the first \$15,000. Hiatt first got to know Pan at Harvard,



started. "We convinced friends to volunteer in return for a letter of recommendation, or for a place to sleep," Pan recalls. And though this isn't how they imagined their careers would turn out, neither Pan nor McKeever can imagine leaving Heads Up. At least not until they accomplish their basic mission: "We want to dispel the idea that poor kids can't learn," McKeever says. A rich career goal if ever there was one.

Lan Nguyen is a staff writer at Worth magazine.

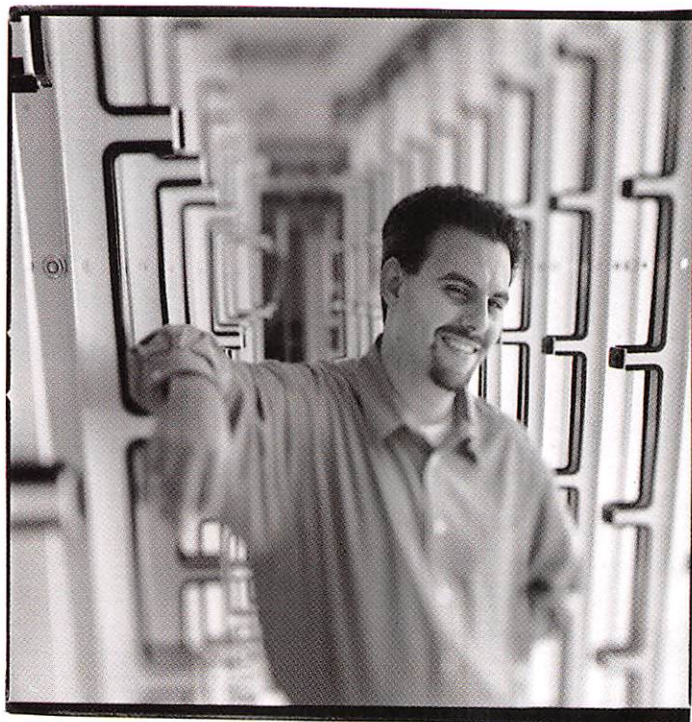
GET ENRICHED QUICK:
Nonprofit?
Not to the underprivileged kids whom McKeever (left) and Pan have taught.

Silicon Valley churns out wunderkind nerds by the dozen. But even by those prodigious standards, Jonathan Heiliger's rise has been nothing short of ridiculous. He has cofounded an Internet start-up and had a hand in two others. He was chief technology officer of a \$200 million data networking firm, GlobalCenter. Now he's heading up a \$100 million corporate venture fund for Frontier Communications.

Jonathan Heiliger is 23.

It's been an unconventional run, to say the least, fueled by a belief that initiative isn't measured in years. Consider how Heiliger got his current gig at Frontier, which had bought out GlobalCenter. First he wrote a memo suggesting that Frontier invest in start-ups in order to gain expertise in, as well as capitalize on, the market craze for everything high-tech. "The idea was floating around for a while," admits Heiliger, whose slight paunch and graying mustache belie the fact that he couldn't buy a drink until two years ago. "But I was the first one to write it on a piece of paper." The higher-ups liked the proposal so much that they put him in charge of implementing it.

It wasn't the first time he was rewarded for following his instincts. Heiliger's frenetic career began at Palo Alto (California) High School, when he was hired to do odd jobs for a local Internet service provider, Barrnet. As he prepared to graduate high school with a 3.2 grade point average, he took a simple but highly unrealistic approach to college: Stanford University or



he got an offer to cofound Internet Systems Incorporated, a Web hosting firm, he leapt. Just months later ISI was bought by none other than Hickey, who had left MFS to run GlobalCenter, which specializes in distributing content for Internet sites such as Yahoo, eToys and Playboy Online. "Jonathan couldn't get away from me," jokes Hickey, who promoted Heiliger to chief technology officer.

Then came the famous memo, and Heiliger's emergence as a venture capitalist. Heiliger plans to work with \$100 million of Frontier's capital over four years. So far he's made equity investments in NorthPoint Communications, a wholesaler to ISPs that uses digital subscriber line (DSL) technology, and Narus, which makes business-intelligence software.

"As a chief technology officer, you're out scouring the marketplace to see what's new and what can be implemented," says his boss. "Now he'll be looking at new technology and seeing what is sustainable." Still, even Hickey worries about Heiliger's ability to handle the pressure. "I wouldn't have wanted to be doing what he's doing when I was 23," he says.

Heiliger takes all the fuss about his age in stride. "I'm young, I admit it," he says. "But age doesn't matter. What counts is having the right drive and the right motivation." On that score, he's wise beyond his years.

Lauren Barack last profiled venture capitalist Steve Jurvetson for P.O.V.

Venture Vulture

It may be a region of 28-year-old billionaires, but not even Silicon Valley has seen anything like the quick rise of venture capitalist Jonathan Heiliger.

BY LAUREN BARACK

BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A MILLION?

Heiliger may be just 23 years old, but his capital carries old-school clout.

bust. A curt rejection letter led him to his next stop, Global Internet Network Services. When the company relocated to Nebraska, Heiliger moved to another Internet service provider, Aimnet Corp. Heiliger then went to telecommunications provider MFS Communications, gunning for a leadership role. "I thought he was a smart guy," says Doug Hickey, then president of Internet services for MFS. "But he was only eighteen years old, and I wasn't going to hire him as vice president of anything."

Heiliger spent a few months on the technical staff, but he was itching to do something bigger. So when

Some entrepreneurs spend years searching for a great business idea. Others stumble on their pots of gold when they least expect it. Jay Bloom simply got Lucky. Lucky the golden retriever, that is. In 1993, after Lucky had hip surgery, Bloom sent the bill to his pet-insurance carrier. But the insurer wouldn't pay, claiming Lucky's illness resulted from a "breed specific" hereditary condition. The insurer also refused to reimburse a host of other expenses, including routine checkups and vaccinations.

Pet Project

Dog owner Jay Bloom couldn't find an affordable way to pay his vet bills, so he created one. Now pet lovers nationwide are benefiting from his service. **BY STEVEN STARK**

Suspecting other pet owners were facing the same predicament, Bloom started digging, and was amazed by what he found: 120 million dogs and cats in the United States, yet only a handful of insurers offering what amounted to little in the way of coverage. So in 1996, Bloom launched Pet Assure, a nationwide membership organization based in Dover, New Jersey. In return for a \$99 annual fee, members receive a 25 percent discount on veterinary charges and between 10 and 15 percent off pet supplies and services from participating vendors. No restrictions. No deductibles. Like a dog to a fresh bone, pet owners came running. Bloom expects to pull in more than \$4 million in sales this year, up from \$1 million last year. Pet Assure recently crawled out of the red and is on track to record \$1 million in profits this year.

Bloom, 31, says the secret of his success was putting together a plan that suited both pet owners and health providers. "We're like an HMO, in that we have a network of service providers, but that's where the similarity ends," says Bloom as he's nuzzled by Midnight, his black Labrador-shepherd mix. (Lucky, new hip and all, died a few years ago.) In return for providing discounts to members, vets receive more customers and a share of Pet Assure's profits. Bloom does not tell the 1,600 vets in the program how to price their services, or which procedures to perform.

And members can see any participating provider without a referral.

When Bloom came up with the idea, he was so confident it was a sure thing that he left his \$100,000-a-year job as a financial officer at Chase Manhattan and started courting investors with the help of his wife, Carolyn. But many venture capitalists weren't convinced, and Bloom fell way short of his expectations. "We sucked it up and went out on our own," he says. "It was \$20,000 here, \$50,000 there. We talked to every lawyer, doctor, accountant, and stockbroker we knew." Within eight months they raised the \$2.5 million they needed to start up.

Today, Pet Assure employs eighteen people, many of whom bring their dogs (and in one case, two birds) to work with them. The staff is working hard to expand Pet Assure's menu of benefits as part of an ongoing dogfight with National Pet Club, a competing organization that charges its members \$59 a year for two veterinary examinations. Bloom argues he'll prevail because National Pet Club does not offer an across-the-board discount for unlimited veterinary visits or profit sharing for participating vets.

Last May, Petco began selling Pet Assure memberships in select stores. Bloom is also marketing the program to corporations, which are offering it as an



employee benefit. More than two dozen companies have signed on so far.

Bloom's pet-peeve-turned-business is clearly catching fire—a major surprise to his family and friends, but not to his sorely underserved market. "He came up with a brilliant formula and found a way to market it," says Phillip Raclyn, a New York vet and one of the first practitioners to join Pet Assure. "He did it by making everybody happy."

This is Steven Stark's first article for P.O.V.

CREATURE COMFORT:

Jay Bloom has parlayed his animal instincts into a doggone sprawling company.

I never really thought about it before, but the year I turned 25 was probably the most defining year of my life. It was the year my father died. The year I almost gave up broadcasting altogether. The year I took a flier and pestered a CNN producer with my résumé tape, a lark that changed my life forever.

When I turned 25 in May 1982, I was living in Dayton, Ohio, doing morning-drive radio

my wall before my father could read the magazine. During my senior year at the University of Dayton, I was mesmerized by the new national sports television station named ESPN. My housemates and I had enough money for either



He Did Go... All...the...Way

Dan Patrick was mired in the minor leagues, unable to break his career slump. So he threw a desperation pass at a fledgling cable network and ever since, he's been *en fuego*. BY DAN PATRICK

("WTUE, Dayton's best rock 'n' roll!") and reporting sports on weekends at WDTN-TV. All I'd ever wanted to be was a TV sportscaster, but I couldn't land a full-time job at any of Dayton's stations. I didn't understand why my career had bogged down. I was positive that I knew more about sports than anybody in the market, and that I didn't look like an ogre on screen. So what was the problem?

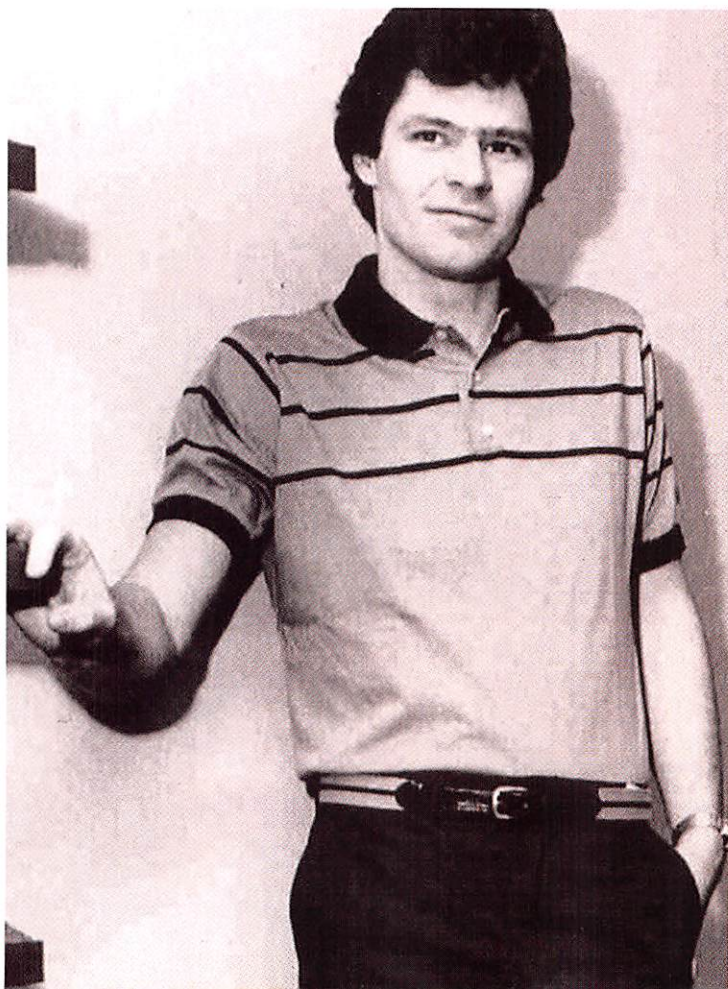
It was a difficult time for me for other reasons, too. My father, Jack, died of lung cancer in October. A teacher of computer science at the University of Dayton, he had always wanted to be a sportswriter. He did get to see me briefly on TV, and I was bad. But you know what? He said I was great, and that was the proudest moment I've ever had in this business. The problem was that no one else seemed to agree with him. And after he died, as my job search got more futile, I had to ask myself Admiral Stockdale-type questions: *Who am I? What am I doing here? Am I not even good enough to work full-time in Dayton?*

I had decided to become a broadcaster when I was twelve. I would cut out pictures from *Sports Illustrated* and put them on

heat or cable: we chose cable. So it became a sort of ritual: we would huddle in our sleeping bags in the living room to watch. We saw Bob Ley and George Grande do the early version of *SportsCenter*, and I can still remember saying to myself, *That's me. I want to do that*. One of my housemates said, "If there's a place for you, that's it."

I wanted to send a tape of myself to ESPN, as well as to the local stations, so I rented a camera and recording deck and shot myself doing five minutes of sports. And when Joe Garagiola, the gregarious former ballplayer and broadcaster, came to Dayton on a speaking engagement, I cajoled him in-

to letting me interview him. Joe may not know it, he may not remember it, but if not for him I wouldn't have had much of a tape to send ESPN. As it was, Ley wrote back and said I had potential, but needed to work at a local station first.



MAJOR LEAGUE BALLS:

At 25 (right), Patrick had big-time dreams in a small-market town; today (inset) he's a TV giant.

COURTESY OF DAYTON DAILY NEWS (BOTTOM)

Talk about humble beginnings. My first job out of college was in Dayton, playing religious tapes on Sunday mornings on the rock 'n' roll radio station. To supplement my income, I mowed greens at the local golf course for \$2.25 an hour. I moved up at the station and finally did land a weekend gig on Channel 2, the local ABC affiliate, reporting from the occasional Cincinnati Reds or Bengals game. But three years later I was going nowhere, and I knew it. I almost quit.

That's when I visited a friend in Atlanta, and decided to bring my tape to CNN's headquarters there. (Those were the early days of CNN, before it became the überstation it is today.) A sports producer named Bill MacPhail said to just drop it off. But as luck would have it, I mentioned to him I was flying back to Ohio the next day, and he told me he was from Columbus. So he brought me in to look at my tape. Happily, there were no local TV-type politics at CNN: you didn't have to fit in, be a certain person, a certain style. They didn't care. It was, "Do you know sports?" Yes. "Can you write sports?" Yes. "How's your voice?" Good. "OK, would you like to work here?" I took a 33 percent pay cut and, a week later, I was working nationally.

I joined a great operation bursting with talent—veterans Nick Charles and Fred Hickman, plus some new young guys by the names of Gary Miller and Keith Olbermann. I was so intimidated at first that I almost quit again. But I got the hang of it soon enough. Reporting sports on TV felt as natural as I'd ever hoped. And you know what? We kicked ESPN's ass. We did it better. I know that's why ESPN hired me in 1989, and then hired Miller and Olbermann.

I've been doing *SportsCenter* ever since. Much has been made of the catchphrases we've coined over the years—"the whiff" and "*en fuego*" are among those I've gotten myself saddled with—but what's more important is the freedom ESPN gave us all to be individuals, to have fun delivering news our way. We've never said,

"Hey, let's be goofy tonight." We just want to be informative while also being entertaining.

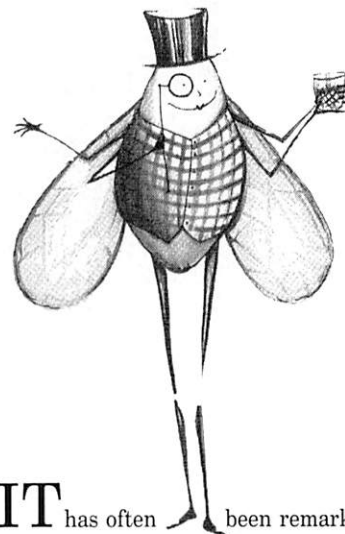
After ten years and more than 2,000 shows, I have to say that I've fallen out of love with sports a bit. Strikes, lockouts, the Dallas Cowboys scandal du jour...you get a little tired of it. Now I take the most pleasure in watching my four young children enjoy sports with the innocence I remember and truly cherish. They still think that the players are just that—just athletes. There are no negative sides to them. My eight-year-old son once asked me, "Is Mark McGwire bigger than Superman?" I was like, "Well, probably." I knew that I once shared his sense of wonder about these guys and loved that feeling. There's a part of me that looks forward to staying that way.

Looking back, when I was 25 I was in too much of a hurry to succeed. When you're young, you're so impatient, wanting to make a certain amount at a certain age, you don't realize how many avenues are out there—and how long it can take to get where you want to go. I almost gave up everything because I was in too much of a hurry to do it all, right then. Thank goodness I took a breath and gave it one more shot with CNN. You might think that approaching them was a sign of impatience, but it was really just a last-ditch attempt at salvaging my career. As in most industries, luck and fate play their roles, too.

I was very fortunate when Bill MacPhail agreed to see my tape that day, when Joe Garagiola let me interview him, when my roommates decided to value heat less than cable. My success has been more humbling than anything else. I know it sounds corny, but I'm still this kid from Mason, Ohio, who is living his dream to be on ESPN. I never want to lose sight of that.

Dan Patrick spent nine years as a weekend sports anchor at CNN; this year marks his tenth anniversary at ESPN. You can't stop him—you can only hope to contain him.

HAMISH NOT SQUEAMISH



IT has often been remarked that devotees of The Macallan Malt Whisky nurture an almost mystical belief in the 'water of life' qualities of their favourite dram. But seldom has it found such expression as in the following true anecdote kindly related to us by Mr C. Wemyss of Ravenhead, Notts.

'My friend Hamish, at a pre-Christmas party in my garden, found a fly had landed in his glass, and drowned. "Don't worry, Hamish," said I. "Have another Macallan in a clean glass." "I shall do nothing of the sort," he replied, removing the tiny creature from his glass and sipping the sherry-gold elixir.

"The Macallan never hurt a fly, and nor does a fly hurt The Macallan!" Ten minutes later indeed the insect stirred and flew off.

"There you are," said Hamish triumphantly. "And now you can give me a gnat's more."

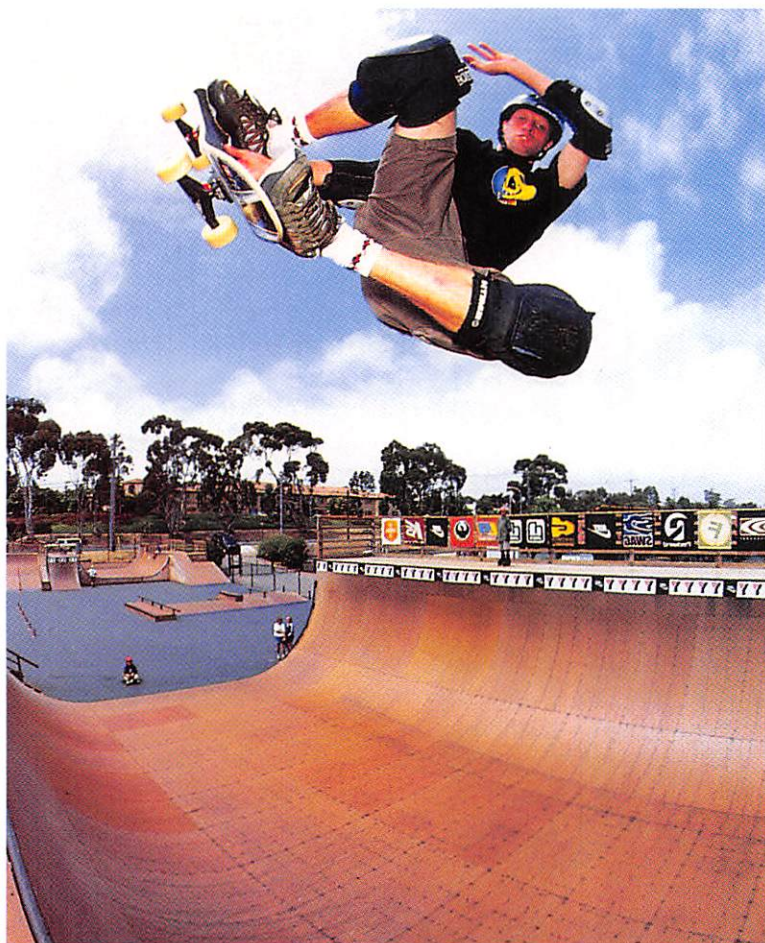
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Tony Hawk stands atop the vert ramp at the 1999 X Games in San Francisco. He is drenched in sweat. Completely exhausted.

But that doesn't keep the veritable nation of skate rats around him from exhorting him on, chanting his name like a god's. To these guys, Tony Hawk *is* a god. He is the world's greatest living skater, the alpha male of the rebel set. But he's also 31—ancient in the dog years of skateboarding—and attempting to execute a “Backside 900,” a 2½ midair rotation that has never before been landed. Not even by him. He's already tried ten times tonight, and wiped out each time—wiped out hard.

Not many millionaire businessmen would subject themselves to such abuse in the name of a relatively obscure sport. But Tony Hawk is not your typical millionaire businessman: He's the co-founder of Birdhouse Projects, a skate-product company that last year brought in \$15 million in revenue. He's also the head of Hawk Clothing, an apparel company that produces skate-inspired clothes for kids ages three to twelve. In his skating career, Hawk has earned



It is a degree of financial success that speaks to a highly developed business acumen. But throughout it all, the Tony Hawk brand has

kids. Conservatively dressed and tanned from years of soaring into the midday sun, the only thing that could give him away are a couple of nasty scars near his elbows. But this is a man who still finishes first or second in every contest he enters—remarkable given that most of the people he competes against were still wetting their Luvs when he won his first professional crowns.

It's a career that began at the age of nine, or so the legend goes, when Tony's older brother Steve gave him his skateboard and watched Tony try a “rock and roll” move. The more Tony got hurt, the more tenacious he became, until finally he landed the trick, bloodied but unbroken.

“After that, I noticed that I was getting better very quickly,” Hawk says. A member of the original Bones Brigade, the Algonquin Round Table of skating, Hawk kept winning contests throughout his teens; by the time he could

He Shoots, He Soars

Tony Hawk is America's greatest living skateboarder—and one of its most savvy young businessmen. How he's managed to become both at the same time is what makes him a singular success. **BY IAN WILLIAMS**

AIR FORCE

ONE:

Hawk has brought his game to great heights—on the board and in the boardroom.

about \$1 million in prize money. His endorsement deals with more than a dozen companies—including Swatch wristwatches, Diesel clothing and Club Med—have earned him another \$1 million. His business card for Birdhouse reads “Media Whore.”

managed to remain, in the eyes of the skate world, “cool.” And how he has pulled off that particular feat may be his greatest trick of all.

You'd never guess Tony Hawk was a legendary anything if you saw him walking the streets of his native San Diego with either of his two

vote, he had bought a house. He had also invented many of his patented tricks. "Tony is obviously the most accomplished skater of all time," says Miki Vuckovich, editor of *TransWorld Skateboarding Business*. "Some guys appear on the scene and make an impact for a year or so, but he's done it year after year. He's a very determined guy."

Even during skateboarding's "mini drought" in the late eighties, Hawk never stopped winning. He won first place in the National Skateboarding Association annual series for a stunning thirteen years straight (1981-93). And then, when the X Games brought skating back into vogue, he kept a lock on almost every national title through this year.

He had already dominated the skateboarding world, but when he cofounded Birdhouse, in 1992, Hawk was determined to do something more: to produce a line of skating products that would be unique for its high-end quality. The decks were indestructible, the wheels made of zippy urethane compounds. Even the Birdhouse shirts became *de rigueur* in the fickle world of skater fashion. Swiftly, the line emerged as the industry's second-highest grosser.

But in a sport typified by bloodied, iconoclastic brats ruining public swimming pools and wearing silly shorts, staying on top of the current style can be a dicey task. So Hawk made a decision: he would leave matters of style to his newly formed Birdhouse skate team, a collection of young, brash skaters with street cred. "We've relied on our young team a lot, because they really have their finger on the pulse," Hawk says. "You know, once it gets cool, it's out."

Next stop: film. As anyone who has ever sat through one knows, most skate flicks are shoddily shot videos featuring fifteen-year-olds cracking their skulls open on cement staircases. With a film called *The End*, Hawk raised the bar. Featuring the Birdhouse team, *The End* offered some of the greatest street skating ever filmed—and quite possibly the only skating filmed on 35mm. "It was our *Titanic*," Hawk jokes. "I was trying to keep it under \$100,000—but, of course, it ended up costing twice that." Still, the cost paid off, as the film broke even and netted an award for best urban

film at last summer's gFest "The Art of Sport" film festival in Denver.

Last year, Hawk again caught the entrepreneurial bug, launching his children's skatewear company, Hawk Clothing. It's a venture inspired by his son Riley, a seven-year-old who's already making his own mark at the local skate park in Encinitas. "It's a weird age group, you know, nothing ever seems to be made for them," Hawk says. Such is the sense that has kept Hawk afloat in a business that, by all rights, should have abandoned him years ago.

Granted, a few of Hawk's business ventures have prompted hard-core members of the skateboarding world to whisper "sellout." There was his Gap

hints that he knows he's getting away with the American Dream.

Which is why it's so strange to see our millionaire standing at the top of the vertical ramp at the X Games that Sunday night, overcome with fatigue and a little bowed, almost as if he has finally met a stunt he couldn't master. It's his eleventh attempt in the Best Trick category, and some of the X Games announcers have given up the ghost. But then Hawk hops on his board, flies down the halfpipe, builds speed with two soaring jumps, comes up the other side—and flies.

Fate could have handed him another last name, of course, but it is Hawk he received and Hawk that suits him best. As his 6-foot-3 frame soars into the

SMOOTH MOVES

In some respects, Tony Hawk is the Darryl Dawkins of skating: he creates the moves, he nails the moves and then he names them for posterity. By all accounts, he's added almost 50 tricks to the skate vernacular. These are a few of his favorites.

THE MADONNA Skater makes a one-footed lean, air to tail, then kicks his front foot downward. Says Hawk: "I was inventing these tricks, but none of them were really making it into the standards of skating. So my buddy told me that I had to name them something trendy to make them stick. It was 1984-85, so I called it the Madonna. And I guess it worked—people still call it that today."

THE STALE FISH A type of "grab" in which the skater maneuvers the heel side of the board around his back leg and then back between his feet. "I was at summer camp and a friend of mine

was reading my diary. I'd written that we'd had stale fish for lunch, but he thought that's what I'd called my new skating move. So I started calling it the 'stale fish.'"

720 McHAWK A double spin in the air, in which the skater comes up on the backside and lands on the frontside. "It was a variation on the 540 McTwist. But nobody ever calls it the McHawk. They just call it the 720."



THE NINE The skater, coming up on the backside, performs 2½ revolutions in the air. Only successfully performed once in history, by Hawk. "There were only about six of us trying to complete the Nine. I cracked a rib doing it, because I was landing at the bottom of the pipe. Then I started getting repetitive motion back problems. It's technically called the 'Backside 900,' but to us, it's always just been 'The Nine.'"

commercial, his photo shoot with Evel Knievel—even the upside-down shot for the "got milk?" campaign. But Hawk tries hard to maintain his skater iconoclasm. "These guys came around wanting to make action figures," he says, with sort of a fake disgust, "and, you know, it didn't feel right."

Still, even Hawk knows there isn't a big leap between a hotshot making millions with an Internet company and him making millions with a skating company—they just dress differently. "I'll keep on doing this as long as I'm attached to the sport," Hawk says, with a smile that

warm night sky, he truly resembles a majestic bird. His flight seems as effortless as breathing. He torques his body backward as he spins 900 degrees, and when he lands on his board, having pulled off the greatest move in skateboard history, he hardly seems to believe it himself. As his fellow skaters carry him aloft and their screams of joy echo throughout the Games, Tony Hawk looks like nothing more than just another stoked kid.

Ian Williams is a coauthor of 13th Gen and Next. He is a recovering—but not reformed—skate punk.

As anyone living anywhere remotely desirable knows, the real estate market is out of control. Want to buy a home in Chicago? Houses there are selling at a median price of \$174,300, up 21 percent since 1993. In Miami, the price tag is \$136,700, a 32 percent jump. In San Francisco it's

Yes, average housing prices have jumped 23.4 percent in the last five years, and yes, interest rates are up a bit. But don't believe the hype: this remains a great time to join the homeowner ranks. At 6.2 percent to 7.9 percent, interest rates are more than two points lower than they were at the beginning of this decade, and less than half of

5 percent a year, outpacing inflation. "By historical standards, that's very strong," says Robert Van Order, chief economist for Freddie Mac, a government-sponsored organization that buys and sells mortgages. "It may get even stronger." Indeed, Van Order predicts that when the baby boomers' kids start shopping for shelter in a few years, demand—and home values—will spike. Add to that continued buying by your peers, and you have a boom with plenty of life left in it. "I think we'll see housing prices consistently outpacing inflation for the next decade," Van Order says.

So now is the time to buy. You can stop throwing that rent money away, you'll get a great tax break and you'll be making an investment that's virtually certain to earn you a decent return when you sell it. When was the last time your stock portfolio offered a guarantee like that? Here's the best part: if you get in with the right lender, you'll end up with a mortgage payment that's not much more than the rent on that closet you call

home, and a down payment amounting to a mere paycheck or two.

And here's a new trick, courtesy of Uncle Sam: an insurance policy from the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which guarantees the lender will still get his money should the homebuyer default on his payments. In the past year, the FHA has become more lenient, insuring as much as 30 percent of a loan. "So if someone walks out, the lender's

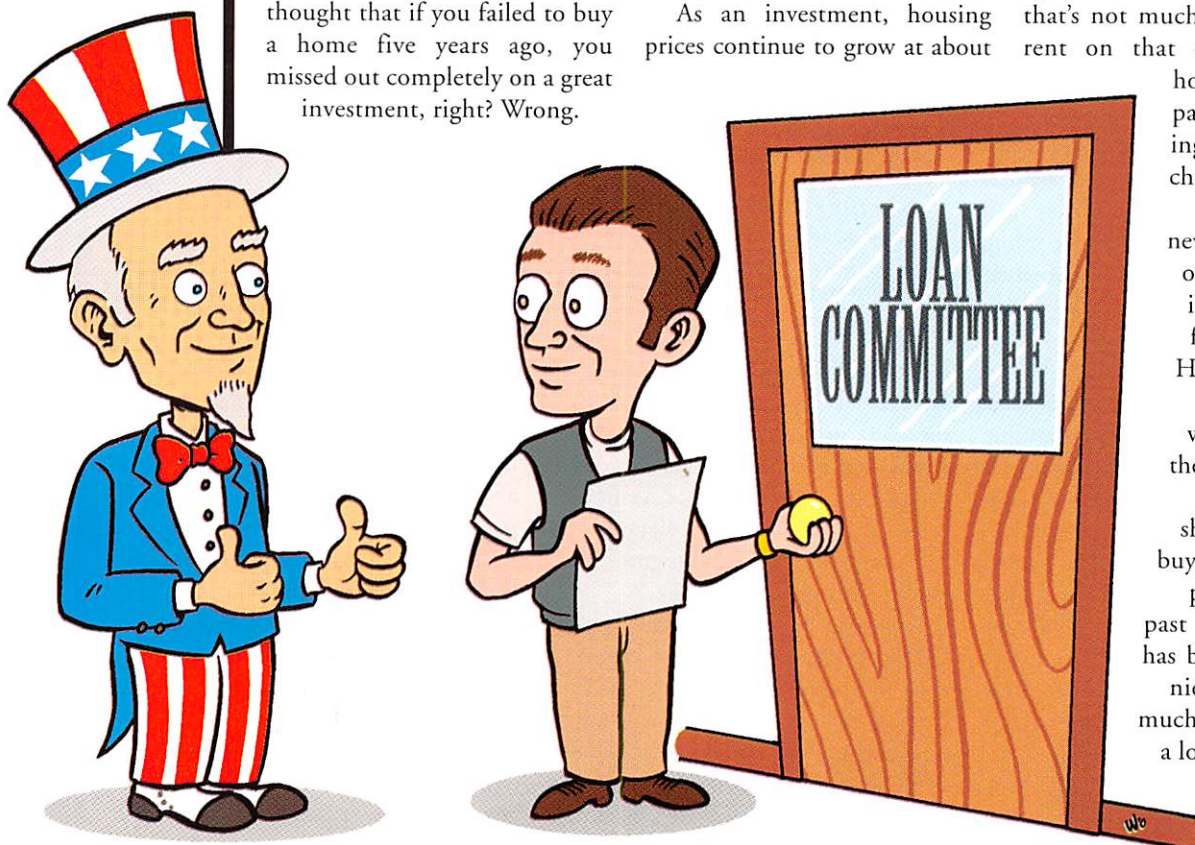
Homeward Bound

Sure, housing prices have skyrocketed. But that won't stop soon. With cheap, easy mortgages available and a new trick courtesy of Uncle Sam, it's still a good time to buy your dream pad. **BY ANTHONY VENUTOLO**

\$359,400—up a whopping 41 percent. In New York, well, you may as well forget about New York. In fact, you may as well resign yourself to the sobering thought that if you failed to buy a home five years ago, you missed out completely on a great investment, right? Wrong.

what they were in the early 1980s. Now factor in income growth: the affordability of buying a new house is the highest it's been since 1973.

As an investment, housing prices continue to grow at about



exposure is only 70 percent," says Bob Williams, a mortgage consultant at North American Mortgage in Tampa, Florida. "At 70 percent, they can offer more mortgages and not get burned."

Lenders are kicking in their own incentives, as well. Indeed, the days of scraping up 30 percent of a home's value for a down payment are pretty much gone. "We can get buyers in a \$100,000 condo with \$3,000 down at the most," Williams says.

Which may lead you to wonder: What's the catch? In some cases, the catch is a nasty add-on called private mortgage insurance (PMI). If you don't put at least 20 percent down, some lenders will make you buy your own insurance, which protects them if you default. This can add \$1,000 or more to your annual mortgage expense. Ouch. Fortunately, more lenders are letting homebuyers circumvent PMI by arranging what's called "80-10-10 financing." That means they'll arrange one mortgage to cover 80 percent of your home's price, then a second loan for another 10 percent, leaving 10 percent for your down payment. Despite the name 80-10-10, you snag an even lower down payment by structuring your loan as 80-15-5, or even 80-17-3. The less you put down, the higher your interest rate, but it beats getting saddled with PMI. "Every penny of your interest is tax-deductible for loans under \$1 million," explains Ray Brown, a real estate broker in San Francisco and the author of several books on real estate. "PMI isn't."

Speaking of interest rates, lenders have become more flexible there as well. There are still two major flavors of mortgage loan: the fixed-rate (you're locked in to a set rate over the life of the loan) and the adjustable-rate, or ARM (your rate rises or falls periodically, along with the interest-rate index that it's tied to). But lenders have introduced hundreds of variations. One of the best for young buyers is the increasingly popular "hybrid mortgage." Let's say you work for a firm that often transfers people, or you think you'll outgrow

your two-bedroom bungalow in a few years. You can arrange a loan with a rate that's fixed at, say, 7 percent, for three years, but then converts to an adjustable-rate mortgage after that. Or you can secure a rate that's fixed for five years, or seven years or even one year. Hybrid loans have lower interest rates than fixed-rate loans. And unlike straight ARMs, they offer the security of not having to worry about your rate adjusting every time Alan Greenspan hiccups—at least until the adjustable part kicks in. By that time, you probably will have sold and moved on.

Remember, the longer the fixed period of the loan, the higher your starting rate will be. So before you apply for a mortgage you should think about out how long you're likely to stay in your starter home. And never base the terms of your loan on the pundits' opinions of where interest rates are headed. "I haven't a clue of what Alan Greenspan is going to do," Brown says. "Anyone who says he does is full of it."

OK, now it's time to apply for your mortgage. If you ignored Mom when she said credit cards would be the bane of your existence, and you collected them like baseball cards, you probably sport a credit report that reads like the average criminal's rap sheet. In the old days, you wouldn't get past a lender's door with bad credit. Not anymore. Lenders are so eager to get a piece of the home-buying craze that you shouldn't have too much trouble finding one to help pull you out of the red. Norwest Mortgage, for example, enrolls some potential buyers in its Homebuyers Club, which helps buyers clean up their credit before approving them for loans.

So let's review: Rising prices? No problem. Small nest egg? No problem. Bad credit? No problem. Girlfriend doesn't like your choice of neighborhoods? If that's the biggest headache you have, it's time to start shopping.

This is Anthony Venutolo's first article for P.O.V.

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P.O.V.
MAGAZINE

So you finally realized your girlfriend is serious when she says she won't wait for you to get signed by Maverick Records. Or perhaps you're craving the security that comes from being a real "professional," like a lawyer, doctor or investment banker. (Besides, they seem to get more chicks than rock stars do these days.) Grad school is beckoning, and this is peak application season. If you're thinking of hitting the books again, be warned: every year, tens of thousands of perfectly qualified people are rejected because they do a shoddy job of completing the application. "I won't admit just anyone who has a 3.7 GPA and scored in the 95th percentile on the LSAT," says Janice Austin, assistant dean of admissions and financial aid at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. "Your application needs to speak volumes about who you are as a person." Here's how to up your chances of edging out all those other geniuses.

1. THINK OPRAH. The great stories you tell at dinner parties often make terrible admissions essays. Let's say you were on your way to the Federal Building in Oklahoma City when the bomb hit. Had you left a few minutes earlier you might have been killed, and thereafter you learned to make every day count. Wow! You'll tell that story for years. But you were a passive player. A better idea is to write about the time your college football teammate came out of the closet, causing the rest of the team to demand that he be benched—permanently. At first you played along, for fear of being ostracized. But then you realized you were wrong and announced, "He stays or I go." OK, so the story's a bit teary, but it shows you're willing to re-evaluate your actions and stand up for what you believe in—traits that will serve you well as a doctor, lawyer or businessman.

2. USE GIMMICKS SPARINGLY. Austin

once received a shoe with a note that said, "Now that I have my foot in the door, I hope you admit me." The gimmick was harmless—until the applicant sent a shoe to another school, too. "There are only about 180 accredited law schools," Austin warns. "We all know each other." You're better off avoiding gimmicks altogether unless the application encourages them. New York University's Stern School of Business, for example, says on its application: "Creatively describe yourself to your MBA classmates. (You may use any method to convey your message: words, illustrations, etc.)" In this case, feel free to send attention grabbers, as long as they directly answer the question. John Lyon, Stern's director of admissions, recalls one applicant who sent a jar of salsa with a homemade

dation from Bill Gates will just make an admissions officer roll his eyes, even if you were a Microserf. All of your recommendations should come from people who know your talents firsthand, such as direct supervisors and former professors. Your mom's second cousin, who happens to be a political bigwig, is also off-limits, unless you've worked for him.

5. GAME THE SYSTEM. In an effort to avoid all-night reading sessions, admissions officers evaluate applications as soon as the mailman delivers them. That means you can get a big leg up by sending yours in early—ideally a full year before the beginning of the fall term you hope to enroll in. "Do it before the class starts to fill up," Austin says. "Otherwise it's like coming to the

Top of the Class

If you're eyeing a top grad school, you'd better not rely solely on a stellar résumé and test scores. You have to ace the rest of the application, too. **BY EVAN FORSTER**

ingredient list describing her personality. "We also had someone send a week's worth of receipts and an explanation of them so we'd get to know him better." Both applicants earned second looks.

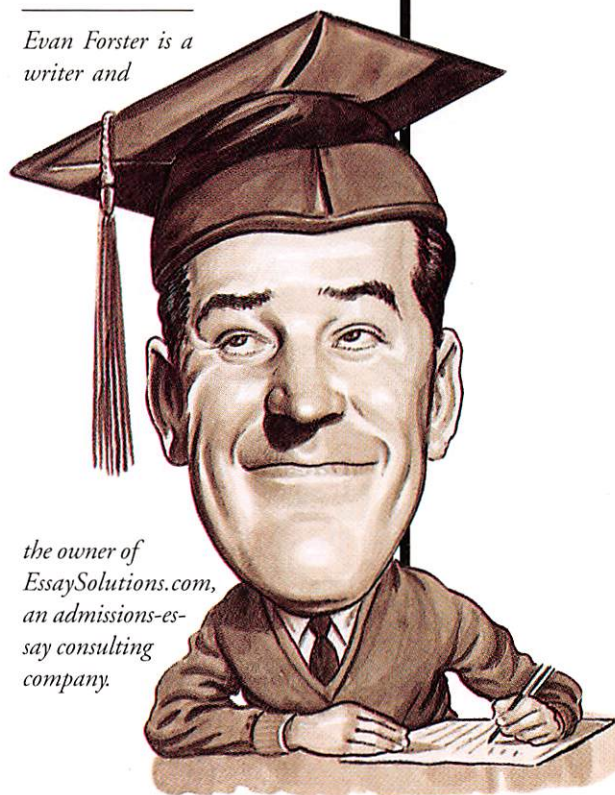
3. SHOW YOU'RE COMMITTED. If you are asked to list hobbies or interests, only mention the stuff you're really serious about. "Substantive involvement in some ongoing activity represents the applicant's ability to commit," says Theresa Orr, associate dean for admissions at Harvard. Merely working at a soup kitchen every Thanksgiving isn't going to impress the admissions set. Commitment means organizing a soup kitchen and helping to run it for a year, or playing on your college basketball team. Anything less is filler.

4. DON'T NAME DROP. A recommen-

dation from Bill Gates will just make an admissions officer roll his eyes, even if you were a Microserf. All of your recommendations should come from people who know your talents firsthand, such as direct supervisors and former professors. Your mom's second cousin, who happens to be a political bigwig, is also off-limits, unless you've worked for him.

Evan Forster is a writer and

the owner of EssaySolutions.com, an admissions-essay consulting company.



Q uick—which sector has produced more sky-high gambles, lost sleep and gnashing of teeth: the dot-coms or emerging markets? OK, probably the dot-coms, but emerging markets are a close second.

After years of being touted as Wall Street's Next Big Thing, the shares of companies based in developing countries such as Brazil, Thailand and South Korea got creamed in 1998's "Asian contagion." In recent months, however, emerging markets have begun to shine again. Some companies'

were so low they had nowhere to go but up. Through late August, the Morgan Stanley Index of emerging-country stocks was up 38.9 percent, more than five times the S&P 500's 7.7 percent.

It may be time to move some money from overpriced U.S. stocks into those with more upside potential. Here are three solid ways to do it.

VANGUARD EMERGING MARKETS STOCK INDEX (800-662-7447) applies the passive indexing formula to emerging markets by buying a basket of established companies from more investor-friendly developing

lands, such as Mexico, Greece and South Africa. Its expense ratio, at .61 percent, is about a third of what most emerging-market funds charge. The fund suffered losses in 1997 and 1998, but has scored a 27 percent gain so far in 1999.

If you'd feel more comfortable knowing that a live fund manager is picking stocks for you, **DREYFUS EMERGING MARKETS** (800-373-9387) is an excellent choice. Manager D. Kirk Henry uses a "bottom up" approach, searching for companies with solid growth prospects and reasonable valuations, without worrying so much about the macroeconomic risks of the countries in which they operate. "There are lots of good companies with solid balance sheets," he says. Clearly he knows how to pick them: the fund has returned 47.9 percent in the past six months, easily beating the major emerging-market indexes and demolishing the S&P.

Some investing experts believe that dabbling in debt (bonds), rather than equity (stocks), is the best way to play emerging markets. "For the five

TAKING STOCK

It's Greek to You As Greece

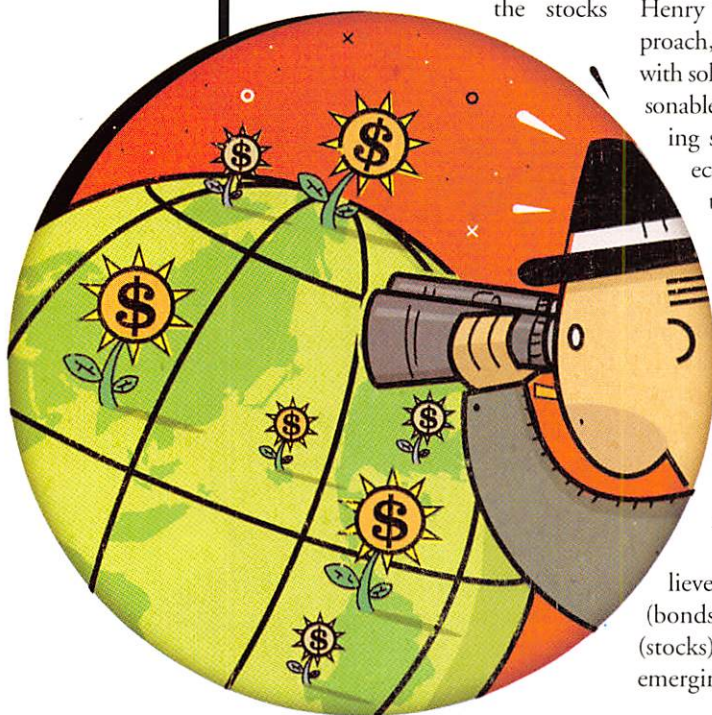
catches up with the wealth of its European neighbors, so will its telephone usage, and that bodes well for the country's phone company, Hellenic Telecommunications Organization (NYSE: OTE). At a recent price of \$10.50 a share, "[the stock] is cheap compared to its peers in both Eastern and Western Europe," says Dreyfus Emerging Markets manager D. Kirk Henry. Speed-dial your broker. —J.R.



Out of the Poorhouse

Some of today's most promising funds are finding buried treasures in the world's poorest countries. BY JOHN RUBINO

stocks are rising because the governments in the countries in which they are based have made positive structural changes. In other cases, the stocks



years preceding 1999, emerging debt was up 15 percent a year annualized, while emerging equities were down around 10 percent," explains Michael Cembalest, co-manager of **J.P. MORGAN EMERGING MARKETS DEBT** (888-756-8645). Why? When you lend money to a company by buying its bonds, you get paid a certain amount of interest each year, no matter the financial health of the company or the home country. And in the event of bankruptcy, bondholders are repaid before stockholders. Cembalest adds an extra layer of safety by only buying bonds that are denominated in dollars. So even if a country devalues its currency, they still owe you the same amount of dollars. The bonds in Cembalest's portfolio are yielding around 14 percent—more than twice what U.S. bond funds are paying and slightly more than what U.S. stocks historically return in an average year (10 to 12 percent).

Just remember: this is still a dangerous world, with flash points everywhere. India and Pakistan are battling, China is threatening to devalue its currency and Taiwan, and Argentina has more problems than we have room to discuss. Someday, though, these guys will get it together. When they do, you'll be glad you were there to profit from it.

John Rubino covers stocks and mutual funds for P.O.V.

PORK RINDS

All together now: "Taxes suck! Down with taxes! We'd rather be subjected to endless *Dick Van Dyke Show* reruns on Nick at Nite than have to pay taxes!" OK. Now that we have that out of our systems, let's get down to business and talk about the tax implications of investing. Just as the government will take a cut of every dollar you earn in the working world, it will snag a piece of your investment pie, as well. The good news is that you can lighten your tax load considerably by understanding a few basic concepts and by giving your stock and mu-

www.deductionsgalore.com As you've probably noticed, your local bookstore is filled with tax guides aimed at idiots, dummies and morons. If it's making you feel a little insecure, I'd suggest checking out Yahoo's excellent Tax Center (biz.yahoo.com/taxes). It's chock-full of tips, news and downloadable tax forms. Then surf over to the equally helpful IRS Web site at www.irs.ustreas.gov. If you've really gone over the edge, you might even enjoy the breathtaking (ahem) discussion of the history of taxes at Tax World (www.taxworld.org). And then there's the tax software. Of the plethora of packages out there, I'd recommend either TurboTax (www.turbotax.com) or Kiplinger's TaxCut (www.kiplinger.com). Both make the pain of taxes slightly more palatable.

—J.H.



from yours truly). Investments held for more than one year, however, are taxed at the long-term

a so-called hot stock turned out to be indigestion, and the stock fell faster than Kato Kaelin's Q-rating. The end of the year is the ideal time to turn such losses into gains. You can erase any and all capital gains with offsetting losses—and these can be targeted, so that short-term losses can take out any short-term profits (and the accompanying 28 percent-plus taxes), leaving just long-term scores, taxed at 20 percent. If you're sitting on a whole pack of dogs, you can erase all of your gains and then deduct up to \$3,000 against your working joe income.

And if you're sitting on a dog you're confident will come back,

Dodge City

Stop! Before you buy that stock or invest in that fund, think about Uncle Sam first. Some savvy year-end planning will reduce your tax bite.

BY JONATHAN HOENIG

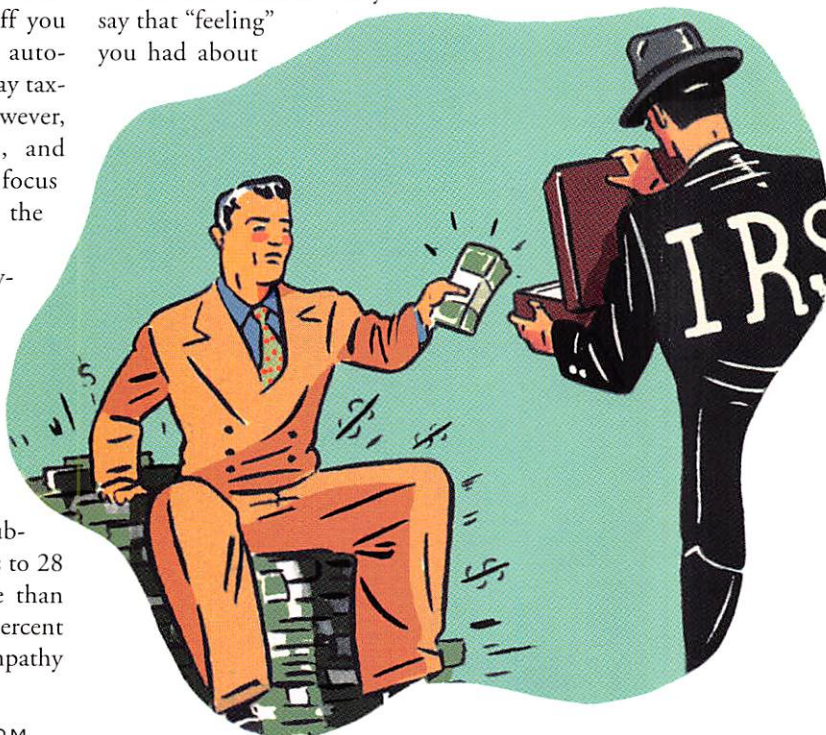
tual fund portfolio a quick once-over before December 31.

Remember this: everything is taxable. Interest from bonds and CDs, savings-account interest, stock dividends and capital gains—it's all fair game for Uncle Sam. Most of this stuff you can't control: you earn it automatically, so you have to pay taxes on it. Capital gains, however, are within your control, and that's where you need to focus most of your attention as the year draws to a close.

Your capital gain on a given investment is simply the profit you make when you sell it. If you sell a stock you've held for less than a year, you'll earn a short-term capital gain, which is taxed as ordinary income. For most of us earning sub-superstar wages, that comes to 28 percent. If you earn more than \$283,150, you'll pay 39.6 percent (and you won't get any sympathy

capital gains rate, which is 20 percent. That's why—in a still-smokin' market environment—you should resist the urge to cash in on the quick winners in your stock portfolio.

Losers are another story. Let's say that "feeling" you had about



along with some short-term wins, here's a neat little trick: buy another bundle of the same stock, wait 31 days, then sell the original purchase by the end of the year. (Make sure your broker dumps the right batch!) *Voilà!* You've created a loss to ease your current tax bite, and now hold the same stock at a cheaper price. Just be certain the stock is a long-term play, allowing you to pay the 20 percent tax once you sell it.

Now to your mutual funds. You can't do much to reduce your tax bill on the funds you already own: the fund manager sells stocks whenever he pleases and then distributes capital gains to fundholders. But if you're thinking of making any new fund investments, there are ways to dodge a high tax bill. Since most mutual funds make capital gains distributions in December, you'll be saddled with a whole year's worth of capital gains taxes if you invest now, even though you weren't around to enjoy the proverbial profit. So wait until January to get in. And look for funds with "turnover" rates lower than 100 percent. Their managers don't sell stocks all that often, and therefore don't get slammed too hard by Uncle Sam. You can find turnover information in a fund's prospectus.

Of course, there's no way to get out of paying taxes on your investment gains altogether. But you can delay the pain by doing all your investing through your 401(k) at work, or through an IRA you set up with a mutual fund company. Then you won't be subjected to any tax water-torture until you retire, assuming you wait that long to withdraw. By the time you are that old, you'll probably be in a bad mood anyway.

P.O.V.'s Jonathan Hoenig is the author of *Greed Is Good* and host of the Capitalist Pig Radio show.

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You can also enter by sending your entry materials along with your name, address and phone number to: P.O.V. Magazine, 56 West 22nd Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10010. Entries must be received by 10/27/99. Sponsored by **POX**.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. VOID IN ARIZONA. Entrants must be U.S. citizens who are 21 years or older as of 10/27/99. For further information and for full rules governing the P.O.V. contest, visit us online at www.povmag.com or send your request for rules along with a separate, self-addressed stamped envelope to P.O.V. at the address listed above for entry submissions (WA & VT residents may omit return postage). Contestants for the "Shortcut To Your Dream" Contest from Slates Clothing (Levi Strauss & Co.) will be the winner of the P.O.V. contest along with winners from several similar contests being conducted simultaneously with the P.O.V. Contest. Full rules for the "Shortcut To Your Dream" Grand Prize from Slates Clothing are available by calling 1-800-SLATEST or can be obtained by sending your rules request along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to the following address: "Shortcut To Your Dream" Rules Request, Levi Strauss & Co., 1155 Battery Street, San Francisco, CA 94111 Attn: Consumer Affairs (WA and VT residents may omit return postage).

100

WITNESSING THE WEB'S GROWTH THESE DAYS—OR BETTER, PLAYING a role in it—is something like sitting in a Porsche 911 with your speed-fiend buddy at the wheel. You're cruising at a comfortable 85 miles per hour, with diners and cows flashing along the roadside when suddenly—wham!—you're thrust back into your seat, tears spray from your eyes and you've got no choice but to gaze at the road ahead and smile.

We're on a fast, wild ride, no doubt about it. And we've got the evidence right here, with our fourth annual list of the Web's top 100 sites, our best yet. That's hardly a boast. Sure, we'll take some of the credit, but how could we go wrong as the Web morphs into a dazzling combination of radio, television and telephone?

Each site in the P.O.V. 100—from giants like ESPN.com to start-ups like onebox.com—combines ingenuity, creativity and, yes, cash. The Web started as a labor of love, but it's been the pursuit of that last ingredient that has stoked the dreams of thousands—millions?—of budding entrepreneurs, at least some of whom possess the brainpower (or good fortune) to help change communication as we know it. When the upstarts get gobbled up by the Yahoos of the Web (as happened with our number-one site, broadcast.com), the cycle of innovation and acquisition only churns at a speedier rate. If this were a celestial phenomenon, viewed from afar, it would look like the creation of a galaxy.

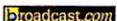

















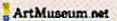












Whether or not you bought shares of Amazon way back in '97, or work for a hip Web design firm like Razorfish, you're a lucky beneficiary of all of this innovative overdrive. Here, with the P.O.V. 100 (all linked from www.povmag.com), you've got the bounty of the Web's entrepreneurial frenzy: 100 sites, the best of the Web. At the turn of the century, cyberspace just keeps getting better and better.

By **Allan Hoffman**

Illustrations by **Mark Matcho**



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— 17 	DealTime www.dealtime.com Comparison shopping, and not just for PCs: DealTime's got everything from Ping putters to Sony Digital Cameras in its database. With e-mail (or pager) notification when prices go down, down, down. 	5 27 	MSNBC www.msnbc.com Better than cable, with news from a super selection of sources: The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> , <i>Slate</i> , NBC. 
47 18 	Kodak www.kodak.com That digital camera you've got? Here's its darkroom. Use PhotoNet to upload those snaps, order prints (or photo gifts) and share them with your grandma in Miami. 	34 28 	Nerve magazine www.nerve.com Literate smut, with highbrow pieces like "Horse Lust: Bondage and Discipline to the Would-be Equestrienne." A Photo of the Day, too, and NerveLink, to lead you to seamier destinations. 
— 19 	The Sync www.thesync.com "Stuff you can't see on TV." For sure. Like <i>The JenniSHOW</i> , with Jennifer Ringley of JenniCAM fame, now fully clothed. Or <i>Here and Now</i> , an unedited <i>Real World</i> from Oberlin College students. Edgy entertainment, electronically. 	36 29 	CitySearch www.citysearch.com City guides for everywhere from D.C. to Dallas (and beyond). Tickets, too, via Ticketmaster. An events empire, with its recent takeover of Sidewalk. 
13 20 	eBay www.ebay.com You want it, someone's got it—some 2.5 million (and counting) items for sale. Perhaps the best thing you could've bought when this site launched: eBay stock. The company's now worth \$16.2 billion. 	— 30 	The Station www.station.sony.com The future of game shows: Play solo or with contestants in Vienna, Vancouver or virtually anywhere. Alex Trebek's worst nightmare. 
		— 31 	TheCentury.com www.thecentury.com Choose your topic: adventurers, civil rights, genocide, inventions, terrorism. An awe-inspiring tour through history. 
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3 1 	broadcast.com www.broadcast.com Where worlds collide. The worlds of television, radio and the Net, that is. One minute you're seeing Al Jarreau in concert, the next you're watching the horse races at Ellis Park, listening to the free-form radio of New York's little gem WFMU, or learning about stress reduction (via reflexology) in a training video. If it's broadcast, it's here, from old TV shows, like <i>Dobie Gillis</i> , to police scanners, audio books and author interviews. Five hundred channels? Compared to this, that's nothing. Think of broadcast.com as the Web's ultimate network, with every interest accommodated. Broadcast.com caters to entrepreneurs, hockey fanatics, even B-movie buffs (who'll groove to <i>Dinosaur Valley Girls</i>). Is this the Web, or what? Sure it is—the Web of the future, with enough tube-like programming to mash a million couch potatoes. Info-overload may be the chief hazard, what with the site's Yahoo-like directory, covering careers, health, news and every other topic you can imagine. (Yahoo, as it happens, acquired broadcast.com in a \$5.7 billion deal.) Overwhelming? No doubt. But awe-inspiring, too. Broadcast.com is a media playground in pixels—the place you'll one day watch man land on Mars. 
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— 4 	DEN www.den.com Just scan the selections, from frat ratz ("jocks, geeks, fabulous babes") to tales from the eastside (<i>"la guerra entre los amantes"</i>) and you know you've left the safe space of the tube. Raw, adventurous, youth-oriented shows, like <i>ex-oticom</i> , with two dudes parasailing on Thailand's Ko Phi Phi. Tune into DEN and witness a fantastic fusion of TV and the Net. 
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— 8 	Imagine Radio www.imagineradio.com Ever want your own radio station? With Imagine Radio, you've got one. Just select the genres—and specific artists—you want to hear, then start broadcasting. Alternative country and hip-hop your thing? You got 'em. Don't like Garth Brooks? Ax him from the playlist. Name your station and spread the word (by e-mail)—or listen to stations others have built. Acquired by—you guessed it—MTV. 
— 9 	onebox.com www.onebox.com The next killer app? Consumer-friendly, if ominous-sounding, "unified messaging." Which means, quite simply, one phone number—free, of course—for voice, e-mail and fax. Sign up and you can retrieve messages—voice, fax, whatever—whether you're online or off, in Santa Cruz or Singapore. Save voice mails (and faxes), or forward them. Pick up the mic and send voice messages over the Net. Say goodbye to your answering machine, your fax machine and lots of hassles. 
— 10 	ArtMuseum.net www.artmuseum.net Art exhibits, such as the Whitney Museum's "American Century: Art and Culture 1900–2000," presented with flashing interactive brilliance. Timelines, annotated images, silent flicks—the whole multi-media shebang, with context and history for the art. A magical masterpiece. 
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37 57 	CBS SportsLine www.sportsline.com Stats, scores and lots more, like coverage of rock climbing and rugby. Featuring GolfWeb, for the links obsessed.  	- 68 	JustTheMusic.com www.justthemusic.com Joe's radio station, with a new show, weekly. Sebdah, Ben Folds Five, Dove-tail Joint. Who's Joe? Who knows? An online mix-tape from a friend you haven't met.  
85 58 	MapQuest www.mapquest.com Lost? You've got no excuse. Colorful maps and point-to-point driving directions, down to the exact address, along with listings of more than 20,000 hotels and restaurants.  	- 69 	ComedyNet www.comedynet.com Stand-up comics, sketches and general hilarity, with shows like <i>Party in Our Shorts</i> .  
- 59 	Platform Network www.platform.net Urban vibes, with a combo of hip-hop, sports and streetwear. Listen to Brand Nubian as you're reading about halfpipe rider Todd Richards.   	92 70 	Deja.com www.deja.com All about ratings. Of Robert De Niro, of the Janus Money Market Fund, of the Whistler I500 Series radar detector. Contribute your own ratings, or get back to the site's roots in newsgroups.   
- 60 	NASA Human Spaceflight spaceflight.nasa.gov The place where you get to watch the assembly of the International Space Station, with diagrams, movies and countdowns. For anyone who dreams of outer space, an impressive replacement for the real thing.  	49 71 	The Library of Congress www.loc.gov All about knowledge. Of Congress, with committee reports and bill summaries, and of the nation's past, with exhibits like "Origins of American Animation."  
- 61 	sixdegrees www.sixdegrees.com Total members: 2,759,812 (and growing). Some of whom you're bound to know. And they know people with interests like yours, and on and on. A neverending net-working party.  	- 72 	FONE ICQ www.foneicq.com Into ICQ instant messaging? Here's voice mail for you. Your buddy calls 800-FONE-427, punches your ICQ number and you retrieve the message online or by phone. Stay connected.    
58 62 	Talk City www.talkcity.com A chat-centered community (and, full disclosure: a P.O.V. partner), with free homepages and talk about everything from pro wrestling to <i>Star Wars</i> .  	- 73 	FasTV.com www.fastv.com From Brett Favre highlights to the latest biz news, video clips archived for your viewing pleasure.  
64 63 	The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition www.wsj.com A lively, digital version of the nation's most hallowed financial newspaper, with e-mail news alerts, <i>Barron's</i> Online and some of the Web's best business research resources.  	52 74 	Internet Movie Database www.imdb.com For the flick fiend, an encyclopedic repository of movie data, with 207,000 movies listed. Plus: viewer ratings, indie film news and movie recommendations. Compendious.  
95 64 	Food.com www.food.com Up for Lebanese tonight? Enter your address and you've got on-line menus and easy ordering. Same for any other cuisine you can imagine.  	- 75 	The Brunching Shuttles www.brunching.com Beware "the occasional swear word." Generally arcane humor, absurdity and playthings, like the "lame domain name" generator. Worth a try.  
60 65 	Encyclopaedia Britannica Online www.eb.com Just \$5 per month for the Encyclopaedia Britannica, from the aardwolf, that dastardly African carnivore, to Zamyatin, the Russian satirist. Authoritative.  	- 76 	Jeffrey Zeldman Presents www.zeldman.com Venture capitalists: Give Zeldman your money! A Web designer's personal site, with everything from gifPLEX ("not your father's gif animations") to the illustrious Ad Graveyard (rejected ads, like one asking, "Has your third nipple lost its charm?").   
- 66 	ClassicGaming.com www.classicgaming.com Miss that old Atari 2600? Don't despair. Pong lives: the site offers a way to "emulate" ancient video-game hardware. Retro yet vibrant.  	- 77 	MountainZone.com www.mountainzone.com So much to do on a mountain: climb, snowboard, bike, ski. Here's where you read tales of awesome adventure, like "Everest '99" (and the discovery of George Mallory's body), or embark on your own adventure.  

RANKING '98 '99	SITE The lowdown	RANKING '98 '99	SITE The lowdown
- 33	Third Voice www.thirdvoice.com The bane of Web designers: Third Voice lets you place Post-it-like notes on Web pages for all the world to see. Graf-fiti? Maybe. A digital test in open expression. 	- 44	WetFeet.com www.wetfeet.com Looking for a job in investment banking? Biotech? Law? Here you'll find the inside scoop on jobs and companies. Hardcore interview prep, too. 
- 34	drkoop.com www.drkoop.com From the former U.S. Surgeon General, a patient empowerment powerhouse. Help with asthma, stress, or whatever else ails you. A medical encyclopedia, Drug Checker and health chats. The doc is omnipresent these days, with an \$89 million alliance for health content on AOL. 	- 45	Everything2000 www.everything2000.com Y2K mania in all its incarnations, from party preparations to "Millenni-moms" with January I due dates. 
- 35	About.com www.about.com A confusion-free way to explore the Web. Online guides for everything from archaeology to urban legends dispense info and advice in neatly packaged, manageable communities. Clarity for the chaos of the Web. 	- 46	The Obscure Store and Reading Room www.obscurestore.com Summarized stories with headlines like TEEN DIES AFTER YEARS OF CHEWING HAIR. Obscure zines to read, too—from <i>Profane Existence</i> to <i>Cometbus</i> . From the creator of MediaGossip.com, also a must for media junkies. 
25 36	The New York Times www.nytimes.com Aside from the solid coverage you'd expect, there's lots of extras, like CyberTimes (for thoughtful tech news) and a book bonanza, with 50,000 archived reviews. 	22 47	CarPoint www.carpoin.com Start your engines, folks. Car-buying at its best: free quotes, quick comparisons, reviews and rebates. Audi TT, here we come. 
16 37	FinanCenter www.financenter.com Handy calculators to answer your big money queries, such as "What will it take to become a millionaire?" and "Should I pay points to lower the rate?" Solid financial advice, all of it free. 	40 48	CNN/SI www.cnn.com A Statitudes center, for stats on streaks and salaries, along with games, like Fantasy Golf Challenge and enough news and commentary in a day to read for a lifetime. Bonus: 54 Web-only "exclusives" from Swimsuit '99. 
10 38	Razorfish Subnetwork www.rsub.net A thinking man's zine from Razorfish Studio, the young Web consulting firm with a market value of more than \$650 million. One of the "subnetworks," RSUBOX, boasts about having the "finest streaming video: stuff you've never seen!" True. 	50 49	HotWired www.hotwired.com Once revolutionary...and now? Still awesome, with the edgy tech of Wired News, the instruction of Webmon-key and the art of RGB Gallery. 
19 39	Learn2.com www.learn2.com Learn to do just about anything, from "capture a mouse" to "help a hangover." A solution for your own stupidity and ignorance, all with the click of your mouse. 	100 50	Word www.word.com A relentlessly inventive experiment in Web publishing. Words, yes, with writers like Mary Gaitskill and Alex Garland, but it's the vibrant interface that's awe-inspiring. 
- 40	Visto www.visto.com You mobile? Most certainly. Here's an all-purpose online toolkit (and storage spot) for life's digital necessities, from calendars to Web bookmarks and MP3s. 	51 51	ChickClick www.chickclick.com A fun and ferocious network of "girl sites that don't fake it," as it says; intriguing, funny, useful stuff in areas like Breakup Girl and Disgruntled Housewife. 
- 41	CDnow www.cdnw.com Is CD-buying retro? Not yet. The latest news, too, and on-target recommendations. A participant in the consolidation craze, via a merger with Music Boulevard and one pending with Columbia House. 	- 52	PalmCentral.com www.palmcentral.com Palm news, Palm software, Palm knickknacks, from Tetris (for fun) to the NYC Bar Guide (for facts, when thirsty). 
30 42	Slate www.slate.com Essential for Today's Papers, a zippy summary of news from the major newspapers. Plus, pieces on politics and culture, served up with smarts. Most of the site free once again. 	26 53	PBS Online www.pbs.org Forget the megapromotions of other TV spots. Here you've got awesome minisites, ranging from the siege at Khe Sanh to the savvy tech commentary of legendary Silicon Valley gossip Robert X. Cringely. 
39 43	Epicurious www.epicurious.com Flatbread, fancy pesto-infused pizzas and everything else related to eating (and imbibing). All served up with style, from the Drink Recipe Search to the Vintage Cookbook Finder. 	76 54	ICQ www.icq.com The ultimate tool for the ultra-wired. Lets you know if your brother's online. Or your boss. Converse, conduct conferences, even host your own chat. 
		- 55	ClearStation www.clearstation.com Stock trends, intricately interpreted with technical analysis and multicolored charts and graphs. A feast for statheads. 

RANKING '98 '99	SITE The lowdown	RANKING '98 '99	SITE The lowdown
- 78 	eGroups.com www.egroups.com A hypercharged system for e-mail lists and group discussions. The basics (for, let's say, an online newsletter), plus lots of extras, like group calendars, private chat rooms and even a twenty-megabyte "document vault."	68 89 	Bluefly www.bluefly.com Duds from Brooks Brothers, Hickey Freeman, Mossimo and more. Outlet-level prices, lotsa product.
- 79 	The Knot www.theknot.com Fiancée have you stressed? Here's a wedding planner, Web-style, with nifty tools, from the Big Day Budgeter to a Wedding Gift Registry. Guy-geared advice, too, like "A Groom's Checklist: 22 Critical To-dos."	- 90 	911gifts.com www.911gifts.com Gifts galore. Gearhead brother's birthday? A digital tire gauge. Grandparents' anniversary? A leather photo album. Suggestions for every occasion.
- 80 	SimCity www.simcity.com A free, Web-based version of the original game, plus a way to share—and build!—skyscrapers and other buildings for SimCity 3000. A classic.	- 91 	register.com www.register.com The new, hassle-free spot where you search for—and buy—domain names, with dot-com monikers going for \$70 for two years. Register now, start a biz later.
- 81 	EMusic.com www.emusic.com Pay to download music? One day, you'll do it. Start here, maybe with the Lemonheads' debut, <i>Hate Your Friends</i> . Just 99 cents a song, or the whole album for \$8.99. Sure beats Sam Goody.	80 92 	FANsOnly www.fansonly.com Alma mater fandom at its best, with obsessive attention to college sports, from recruiting rumors to "Gameday Hangouts" for tossing back a brew.
- 82 	Blue Mountain Arts www.bluemountain.com E-cards for all occasions: All Souls' Day, Bastille Day, Purim. Hallmark? Ha!—you'd be dating yourself.	- 93 	Google www.google.com Remember your basic "search engine"? Here's one that really works, scouring billions of links for junk-free matches—and it does so quickly.
62 83 	ZDNet www.zdnet.com A mammoth, we've-got-everything-tech site. A software library. Terrific reviews of PCs and peripherals. Some 30 channels for tech junkies of all stripes.	75 94 	Priceline www.priceline.com Round-trip to Paris for \$305? Or should it be \$285? You decide. Well, sorta. Name your price (for hotels, cars and more) and wait for the answer. A clever way to shop—and to build a biz.
35 84 	Morningstar www.morningstar.com One-stop shopping for all your mutual fund needs, from ratings to top holdings to returns and more. A must for minding your money.	94 95 	Moviefone.com www.moviefone.com Movie times and tix, plus lots more, like previews and interviews with moviegoers. Wait on line? No way.
- 85 	Consumer Reports www.consumerreports.org Site subscribers cough up \$24 a year for trusty advice with ratings and recommendations of 27-inch TVs, mutual funds, Olestra chips and anything else you're able to buy (or consume). Rely on it.	- 96 	the remedi project www.theremediproject.com Experimental art exhibits, expressly for the Web. Astonishing and enigmatic, yet somehow soothing. Like looking at a painting in progress.
63 86 	Switchboard www.switchboard.com Where to find the roomie who stole your Bruce bootlegs. Search for phone numbers, e-mail addresses, businesses. Extras, too, like maps and a way to store your bookmarks online.	- 97 	The Onion www.theonion.com Mock news ("Congress Approves \$4 Billion for Bread, Circuses") beamed to a salivating planet via the Web. Irrelevant, ironic and deadpan hilarious.
67 87 	iOwn www.iown.com Own, as in a home. Finance, refinance. Shop for rate and point combos at multiple banks, with tools to help you decide how much you can afford. The bottom line: a new way to borrow. Formerly HomeShark.	- 98 	Cardhouse www.cardhouse.com The detritus of life, collected for your amusement (like 55 found photos). An observational outpost for the ephemera elite.
- 88 	The Industry Standard www.thestandard.com The way to stay on top of the Internet economy, from cable modems to e-commerce. Sign up for the e-mail newsletters, like Media Grok, which organizes updates on the never-ending Net coverage from around the world.	- 99 	The Blair Witch Project www.blairwitch.com Delve deeper into the disturbing secrets of the Blair Witch, with a timeline tracing the myth from the blood-drawing accusations of 1785 to the footage found in 1995 (and then some). A study in marketing mastery.
		- 100 	memepool www.memepool.com An ongoing conversation about what's new on the Web (and in life). When you're done surfing the p.o.v. 100, here's a way to tap into an ever-expanding list of links, from smart folks who exist only in cyberspace.

The Unmagnificent SEVEN

The seven worst sites on the Web—and what you can learn from them. **By Lisa Margonelli**

SURE, THERE ARE BAZILLIONS OF FANTASTIC SITES FLOATING OUT THERE IN THE ether—P.O.V.'s top 100 are merely the best spots to start. But there are also loads of lame sites out there: terrible, terrible sites that want to unload bad stock tips, display ugly baby pictures and sell you shots of nasty coed shower cams. Then there's a slightly lower rung of Web hell: sites so achingly bad that they are actually good. The seven sites below offer tricks to emulate, lessons to learn and models to steal as you plan to sail off to your own version of Web success. Sure, it's a little like picking through a car wreck for salvage parts...but that's one way to win on the wild wild Web.

1. Aggregate and Organize a Scarce Product

SITE: Prison Babes.com, www.prisonbabes.com

WHAT IT OFFERS: For a modest fee, it will give you the address of a female prisoner who'd like to make your acquaintance.

WHY IT'S A WINNER: Prison Babes.com has two things going for it. First, it deals in a product with a finite quantity (the babe part) and very limited access (the prison part). If you're going to sell a service on the Web, be sure, like the founders of Prison Babes.com were, that it's rare and intriguing. Second, Prison Babes.com, like the best Web sites, has organized its product in the broadest possible categories right on the homepage: "White Ladies, Hispanic Ladies, Black Ladies and Bi-Sexual Ladies." Click on what you're looking for. How's that for class?

MOTTO: It worked for Amazon.com, it'll work for you.

2. Keep Users in Your Site, Get Their Credit Card Numbers

SITE: Any and all X-rated sites—[ww5.snatch-es.com](http://www.w5.snatch-es.com), for starters

WHAT IT OFFERS: Dirty pictures, streaming sex videos, the works.

WHY IT'S A WINNER: Sex sites have led the Web in the science of getting users to pay for content. Among their tricks: replicating browser windows—as soon as you click out you are presented with another scene; getting users in a hypnotic "flow state" by requiring them to click repeatedly; and offering tantalizing free content to finally get users to cough up their credit card numbers. Oh yeah...and sex.

MOTTO: It worked for ClubLove, it'll work for you.

3. Create a Web Brand, Market It Virally

SITE: The Hamster Dance, www.hamsterdance.com

WHAT IT OFFERS: A page of animated dancing hamsters that takes forever to download, an online store with dancing-hamster products, the ability to e-mail the page of dancing hamsters to friends who go crazy while the page downloads.

WHY IT'S A WINNER: Just about everybody has received the hamsterdance e-mail from their friends and semi-enemies. It's nauseatingly cute, stupid and memorable. Then, of course, there's the merchandise—which, at \$39.95 for a gift pack, is not cheap. Finally, the name says exactly what it is—unlike say, Quokka.com or eBay.

MOTTO: It worked for Star Wars, it'll work for you.

4. Simple Interface Means Lots of Sheep

SITE: AOL—well, not the Web site actually, but the AOL subscription service homepage, www.aol.com.

WHAT IT OFFERS: A limited number of choices, not a lot of text, a few pictures and timely headlines. And of course, the full-on AOL experience.

WHY IT'S A WINNER: The AOL interface is so simple and so reassuring, no one can get lost. So the people, like eighteen million of them, sign up.

MOTTO: It worked for AOL, it'll work for you.

5. Hijack Other People's Content to Build Your Own Site

SITE: Worst of the Web, www.worstoftheweb.com

WHAT IT OFFERS: Daily reviews of "worst" Web sites, as told through three pseudopersonalities.

WHY IT'S A WINNER: It's no secret that getting good content is one of the most difficult tasks on the Web. So this site basically borrows from other people, creating the feeling of a mass amalgamation of information. In this case, however, they use bad content.

MOTTO: It worked for Yahoo, it'll work for you.

6. Find an Obscure Hobby, Develop Community, Push a Product

SITE: Urinet/Urifun,

<http://utopia.knoware.nl/users/cvdk/urinetherapy/homeuk.html>

WHAT IT OFFERS: Practical advice, community and humor about the use of urine "to promote and maintain health." Also includes an online store.

WHY IT'S A WINNER: Urinet takes a substance common to everyone—urine—and turns it into a hobby, a forum, a cure for what ails you—and a Web site! This fact-based site includes Urifun, which features "artistic" pictures of people engaging in urine therapy. Best quote: "It has the taste of smoked ham! Very smoked! You forget that it's warm." It also offers a world conference and a glow-in-the-dark urine collector—all with an Amsterdam-inspired sense of humor.

MOTTO: It worked for Martha Stewart, it'll work for you.

7. Build a Tool and They Will Come (and You Can Serve Them Banner Ads)

SITE: The Death Clock, www.deathclock.com

WHAT IT OFFERS: Enter your birth date and hit the Death Clock button. The Death Clock will tell you how many seconds you have to live, assuming that you die at the average age of death.

WHY IT'S A WINNER: The Death Clock has finally determined the true killer app, one every mortal needs. Then it takes the opportunity to serve you banner ads. How's this for surreal? Recent ads read: "FREE FREE FREE...golf balls." The Death Clock has also become a platform for its builder to expound upon his likes (*The Blair Witch Project*) and his dislikes (stupid people). It's enough to make you want to speed that clock up.

MOTTO: It worked for Hotmail, it'll work for you.



CONVERGENCE Ahead

All Together Now...

THE INTERNET ECONOMY, TO EMPLOY THE BUZZPHRASE DU JOUR, TEEMS WITH jargon for the latest trends. "Sticky" Web apps, "push" technology, "viral" marketing—these catchwords enter (and exit) the infomaniac's vocabulary with the speed of a T3 line.

Now and then, one of these buzzwords actually jives with a concept that will be around for a while. Convergence is one of these, and for a reason: it's happening, now. Broadcast.com, our number-one site, turns your PC into a TV, radio and screening room, all at once. Everywhere you look on the Web, you'll witness one medium or communications device, from the television to the telephone, cavorting with another in a digital mating dance that's so frenzied, so overt, it would garner an NC-17 rating if it were a flick. Luckily, the offspring is available for immediate viewing.

For a time, I was suspicious of all the talk of convergence. You know, buzzword-phobia. No longer. I've been transformed from Convergence Crank to Mr. Convergence. Not because I think convergence is the future of the Web, which I do, but because much of the Web experience—the tools and the entertainment I use, view and hear on a daily basis—is evidence of converging media. Buzzword? Definitely. Bunk? Definitely not.

Here, then, is the proof, with five examples of convergence ready for your consumption:

As I write this, I am listening to an Internet radio station of my own creation, with the name *Anywhere's Better Than Here*. You'll find my station at **Imagine Radio** (www.imagineradio.com), along with scores of other user stations, like *Soft Side of the Moon* and *Lizard Lounge*. Currently playing: "Wolfman's Brother," from Phish. I can rate artists as I hear them, giving them less "weight" for future rotations, or review entire playlists, awarding John Hiatt a "5," let's say, while consigning Zep to a "1" or "2." I haven't turned on my stereo in days. And that, let's face it, is the true convergence test—when something new lets you ignore your treasured, if aging, electronic paraphernalia.

Animation is at the forefront of the convergence frenzy,

largely because it doesn't require the multimegabyte downloads of full-blown video. One of these days, a Web-created character will move to film (or the tube), *South Park*-style. Maybe it will be that chunky superhero, *Fatman*, now broadcast on **Animation Express** (www.hotwired.com/animation). Be the first to see *Fatman*, along with other subversive Saturday morning cartoons, for your lunch-break enjoyment.

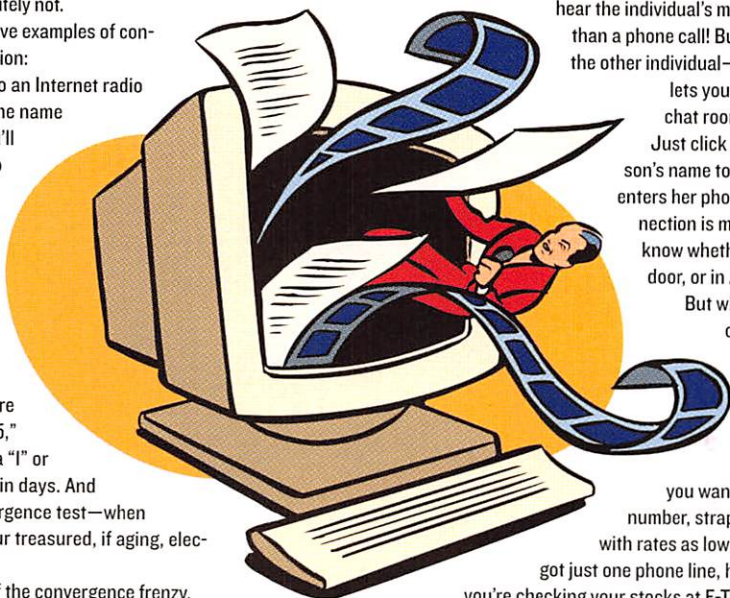
Early attempts at next-generation entertainment for the Web, like the soap opera *The Spot*, were, for the most part, unbearably awful. Now, with better methods of streaming video, along with the rush toward high-speed connections, new Web-based entertainment networks with video-driven programming have begun to appear—often with the backing of Hollywood cash and talent. At **The Sync** (www.thesync.com), feature films, like the classic *Nosferatu*, fraternize with edgy video shows like *SnackBoy*.

I'll let you draw your own conclusions about why someone would use **AT&T Chat 'N Talk**, which is available through Excite (talk.excite.com/chatntalk/).

Just consider this Chat 'N Talk scenario: You've met someone in a chat room and, after a few preliminaries, you're yearning to hear the individual's melodious voice. What better way than a phone call! But you don't want to give her—uh, the other individual—your phone number. Chat 'N Talk lets you phone someone you've met in a chat room without exchanging numbers. Just click on the phone icon next to the person's name to start the call. If she's game, she enters her phone number, as you do, and the connection is made behind the scenes. You won't know whether she's in the apartment next door, or in Anchorage.

But who says you need copper wires to connect? **Net2Phone** lets you place telephone calls via the Internet. Once you've installed Net2Phone (www.net2phone.com), a handset pops up on your screen when you want to make a call. Enter the phone number, strap on your headset and you're off, with rates as low as five cents per minute. If you've got just one phone line, here's a way to call Mom even as you're checking your stocks at E-Trade.

—A.H.



NICHE Fever

The Portals They Are A-Changin'

IS BOLT, AN ONLINE SPOT FOR TEENAGERS, A COMPETITOR OF LYCOS? YOU BET, as destinations designed for niche audiences target anyone disenchanted with the cookie-cutter aspects of the megaportals. **Yahoo**, **AltaVista**, **Excite** and the rest of the Web's primary portals evolved from the Internet's bare-bones search engines, transforming themselves in a few fast years into one-stop shops for all your digital needs: stock quotes, weather reports, news, free e-mail, shopping. Along the way, they added personalization to snag your attention, letting you set up a "start" page (like My Yahoo, for example) with your own television listings and sports scores. Portals aim to please everyone, with an unfortunate result: while high on convenience, they're low on character.

Enter the "vertical portal," insider jargon for a spot with niche-focused content and community, along with a service-driven, portal-like approach. **Bolt** (www.bolt.com) epitomizes the trend, with its free e-mail, talk of hair-

bleaching and dating disasters, as well as a look that's way cooler than anything you'll see at Yahoo. Go to **WebMD** (www.webmd.com) and you'll find the same thing, but now your world revolves around health. Expect to see these niche portals proliferate, even as your favorite sites, from sports hubs to online brokers, tack on portal-like features. The reasoning is simple: the center of your online life should be a spot devoted to something that matters to you—your career, your friends, your hobby.

That said, the mainstream portals still offer a more complete selection of features than what you'll find elsewhere. What's more, they add new gizmos, like free voice mail and instant messaging. Most portals will serve you well, but we prefer Excite and Yahoo as our top picks. Also worth a look: **GO Network** (www.go.com), **Lycos** (www.lycos.com) and **Netscape Netcenter** (www.netcenter.com).

—A.H.

INTERNET on the Run

We Have Seen the Future...



INTERNET ACCESS FROM YOUR PC? HOW TWENTIETH CENTURY. UNLESS YOU'RE HOPELESSLY retro, or a die-hard Luddite, you'll soon be grabbing an appliance to get online.

Let's agree on a basic proposition: convenience should be at the heart of the online experience. Movie tickets, e-mail, MP3s, weather reports, stock quotes—you want these anytime, anywhere. Yet neither the computer, that bulky, deskbound, crash-prone dinosaur, nor even the laptop offers much convenience. These machines were designed for the working drone, not for the mobile everyman.

Enter the Internet appliance: any digital device, from an Internet-capable wireless phone to an MP3 player, offering hassle-free online access or connectivity. The "appliance" moniker conveys everything the PC is not—easy to use and designed for just one or two purposes (compared with the computer, with its "I can do anything" approach).

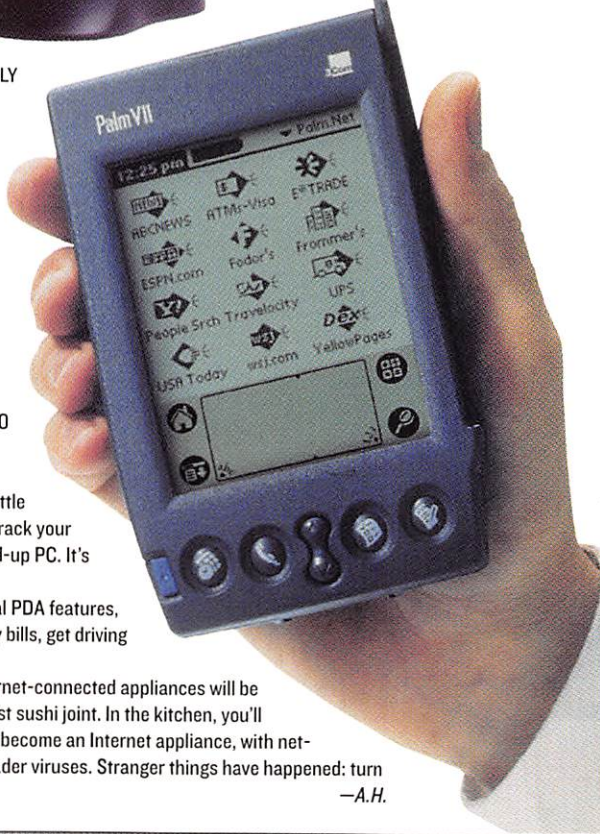
Consider the **Sharp TelMail TM-20** (\$149, with a \$9.95 monthly access fee), a checkbook-sized e-mail grabber. Just dial an 800-number and hold the TelMail up to the phone—even a pay phone—to send or receive e-mail. With two AA batteries, it runs for 100 hours. At 9.5 ounces, you can throw it in your backpack without having to beg your girlfriend for a massage at the end of the day.

Or try the **iToaster** (\$19.95 per month for two years, from Microworkz.com), a nifty little box—sort of like a stripped-down computer—which lets you surf the Web, check e-mail, track your finances and handle other PC-like tasks, but without the glitches that come with a souped-up PC. It's an easy answer for those who want to be a little wired with as little thought as possible.

For a more multipurpose tool, the **Palm VII** (about \$599, from 3Com) offers the usual PDA features, but also the ability to connect to the Net wirelessly, via a pop-up antenna: trade stocks, pay bills, get driving directions. It's the latest and greatest gadget in the ever-expanding Palm universe.

This is, of course, just the beginning. We're entering a networked future in which Internet-connected appliances will be everywhere. In your car, you'll use voice commands to check messages and find the closest sushi joint. In the kitchen, you'll place grocery orders from a barcode-reading Internet fridge. Ultimately, you yourself may become an Internet appliance, with networked chips traveling through your body, *Fantastic Voyage*-like, to alert your doc to invader viruses. Stranger things have happened: turn on the tube for an hour or two and you've got a fifty-fifty chance of seeing Matt Drudge.

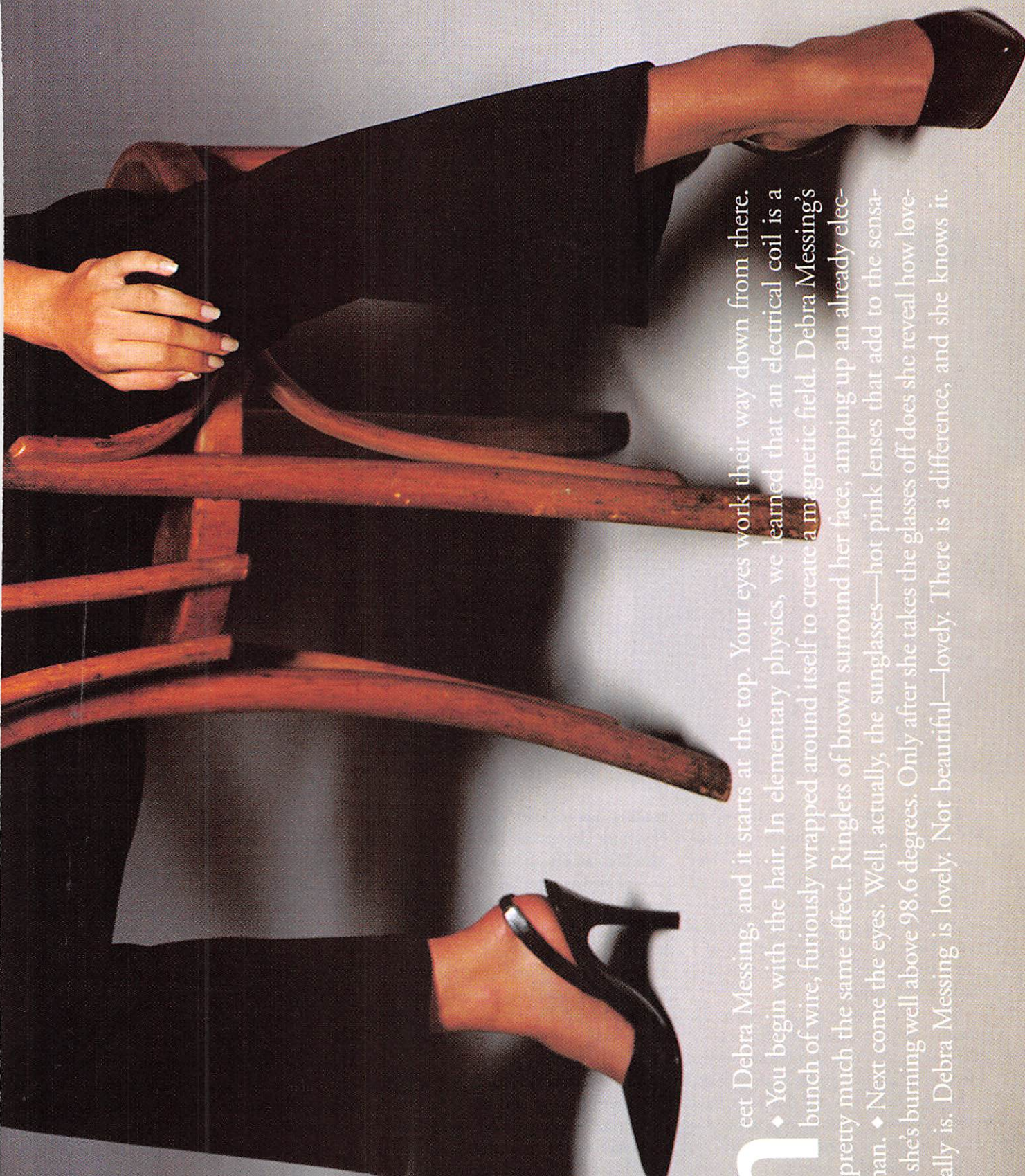
—A.H.



grace under pressure

She's beautiful. She's brainy. She's the buzz of Hollywood. Now all DEBRA MESSING has to do is carry *Will & Grace*—and her network's hopes—all the way to the top. By Ian Williams
Photographs by Mark Platt





meet Debra Messing, and it starts at the top. Your eyes work their way down from there.

- ♦ You begin with the hair. In elementary physics, we learned that an electrical coil is a bunch of wire, furiously wrapped around itself to create a magnetic field. Debra Messing's hair has pretty much the same effect. Ringlets of brown surround her face, amping up an already electric woman.
- ♦ Next come the eyes. Well, actually, the sunglasses—hot pink lenses that add to the sensation that she's burning well above 98.6 degrees. Only after she takes the glasses off does she reveal how lovely she really is. Debra Messing is lovely. Not beautiful—lovely. There is a difference, and she knows it.



of her bum—that could make her our next great comic actress.

Her guest stints were the stuff of legend to fans of *Seinfeld* and *NYPD Blue*, and her role as Stacey on Fox's late, great *Ned and Stacey* cemented her relationship with a couch-besotted nation. She's been in a Woody Allen movie (*Celebrity*), a Keanu Reeves flick (*A Walk in the Clouds*) and a sci-fi drama (*Prey*). And now she's got something almost every actress in Hollywood covets: a potential breakout hit TV show.

Will & Grace, the story of a straight woman living with a perfect but, unfortunately for her, gay man, owes more to *I Love Lucy* than it does to *The Odd Couple*. It also owes much to Messing's ricochet-like comic timing and rat-a-tat-tat delivery. And after a season of surprisingly high ratings and immensely good buzz, NBC execs did some things that surprised even the most jaded of Hollywood vets. They moved *Will & Grace* into *Frasier*'s old Tuesday night spot; they also bought the four leads matching Porsche Boxsters. It's an exceptional perk, which underscores how important Messing and her colleagues have become to NBC.

Pressure? Sure. But it doesn't seem to phase her. Debra Messing is not a girl with an idle mind. And the way things are going, she won't have to worry about idle hands, either.

So you're on a successful show. Your career is taking off. What has set you apart?

I think so much of this business has to do with luck. First and foremost, I'm just incredibly lucky. Whatever trends have been going on in the last five years in the business, somehow there's been a place for me within them.

But my family's credo—"education first and foremost"—has also served me well here. I can't prove it, but I can feel it in my gut. I mean, when I grew up, I watched *Fame* and all I wanted to do was go to the High School for the Performing Arts...

Then, as you become accustomed to her visage, she will suddenly become animated and her face will contort. Her everygirl looks will shift from one end of the spectrum to the other, alternately serious and frivolous in the space of nanoseconds. They are the rubbery reflexes of a gifted comic performer—and they will catch you by surprise.

But it is only once you reach the mouth—and, by extension, the voice—that you truly understand what makes Messing special. It's a perfectly fine voice, to be sure, but that's not the point. No, Messing's voice is most remarkable for what it conveys: a stunning intellect.

In Hollywood, where you're lucky if any of your favorite actors bothered to finish high school, Debra Messing is almost, well, hypereducated. She's a 31-year-old woman who cut her teeth at Brandeis University as a theater undergrad before at-

tending the graduate acting program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She can sing, dance, do theater, musical comedy—after an hour or so with her, you get the impression she could probably invent several vaccines if she set her mind to it.

Ask her the standard Hollywood starlet questions and you'll barely elicit a shrug. *Parties?* There's no time for that. *Guys?* She's engaged to her boyfriend of the last eight years.

But ask about her work and her craft, and Messing plugs in. She oozes with confidence, speaks with her hands, enunciates with flawless proficiency and laughs with her head thrown back. She seems wired for sound, juiced, on. She's the pretty girl in the back of biology class whom you had a crush on, even though she was ruining the curve. And you realize that it just may be her cerebrum—instead

And dance on taxis.

Exactly! And my parents said no, you're going to stay here, have a normal life and have classes to further your education, and you're going to have influences from things outside the arts. Because you're still growing, you're still evolving, and we don't want you to fail to discover what your *true* passion is, in case it isn't the arts. We want you to have more resources.

Which brings up a problem: As a smart woman, how do you survive in a town that obsesses over physical beauty?

Well, the best thing I ever did—besides going to London for a year and immersing myself in a culture where nobody knew where I was from—was going to grad school. With that education, I've been able to come to L.A. and commit myself to what I'm doing with confidence.

L.A. is a really easy city to feel lost in, like you have no control of your life, because in fact you don't. So much of it is just waiting around for people to *allow* you to do what you do best. Unlike a writer, who can sit down at any time and create, you have to be given the opportunity to create. Fortunately, my education has empowered me to say no to offers that I feel are not different enough from what I've just been doing.

Like what?

I've had several offers for comic films that didn't feel right. Then I got another movie offer, and it was a drama—and I was like, "What? Are you kidding? Me?" But it was [clearly] the right thing to do.

So you did the movie?

I did. In Africa. In the Sahara Desert. It's a biblical epic called *Jesus*, and I play Mary Magdalene.

Really? Wow.

Exactly! [laughs] I was just sitting at home, and they called and said I had an offer to play Mary Magdalene. The Italian producer just happened to see *A Walk in the Clouds*, and he was familiar with my work, and he thought of me. I mean, when else was I going to get to do this? Of course, it was 145 degrees every day.

So what was your hesitation, initially, in doing *Will & Grace*? I heard it took a bottle of vodka to get you to sign on.

Ha! [laughs] Well, a lot of it was just pure exhaustion. I literally had not stopped working for three years. I was in New York, working on this very intense drama called *Prey*, and I was the lead. The ratings were coming in, and we were right at the point where we didn't know if we were going to be cancelled or not. Then I got this call from my agent saying, "I have this new pilot for you to read," and I said, "How can I read a pilot? I won't know until May if *Prey* is coming back!" And they said, "Let *us* worry about that." And I said, "You know what? I'm going to *sleep* for two months. I've given everything to this drama. All my creative juices



MESSING AROUND: Putting fire and ice into *Will & Grace*.

are gone." But then I read the pilot and thought, *Hmmm, well, maybe I should have a casual meeting with these guys*. And then I got a call from [the producers] and they said, "We're coming to your house." So they drove over in a blinding rain and showed up at my door like a couple of drowned rats, holding a bottle of vodka in one hand and a bunch of limes in the other.

Lime drops!

Right! Whoa! And I'm not a drinker, so they quickly made drinks, and they said, "We want you to do the show. What do we need to do to convince you?" We talked for three and a half hours.

How is it, do you think, that this show has flown under the political radar? Unlike with *Ellen*, there haven't been any serious protests about a gay lead character in a sitcom.

Well, that's ultimately what made me decide to do it. I had to be assured by the producers that the very first priority, *always*, would be to make people laugh. Not to be critical. Not to proselytize. To

make people laugh. People come home from work and they're tired and they want distraction; they want to laugh. And now, much to my shock, there hasn't been a right-wing revolt or picketing or exposés about how we're ruining America. Because the show is funny first. As it should be.

You're in *Frasier's* old Tuesday time slot this season. Do you feel additional pressure to perform?

Certainly. In my experience, on shows that don't have a lot of attention or expectations, you feel like you can come in and do your job and either way it's OK. But for the first time in my life I happen to be a part of a show that, right now, a lot of people are going to watch. Which is good, but there is a *lot* more pressure.

It's nice to be "Grace" when the title of the show is *Will & Grace*. What kind of contract do you have?

Actually, it's very standard, which is pretty amazing when you think about it. You sign a six-and-a-half-year contract, and you're bound to it year after year. But what usually happens is that the network looks at the lineup at the end of the season and decides what it will be for next fall. So you can spend the entire summer waiting around to see if you have a job. At any time, they can fire you. Luckily, a couple of weeks before we wrapped on *W&G*, we were told we were coming back. And that was the first time in my life that ever happened.

Plus, the network gave you a Porsche Boxster as a first-year bonus. How did you feel about that?

Oh boy. [laughs] Well, I have to say I was struggling with discomfort about it at first.

Yeah, but they sure are fun to drive.

Oh, don't get me wrong! [laughs] I'm thrilled to have it. I've never owned a car in my life. And I was like, *OK, conservatively, now I know that we're not going to be cancelled for six months*. I mean, it'd be a really bad business move for NBC to give us gifts like that and then cancel our show a week later.

Ian Williams still, to this day, mourns the passing of Ned and Stacey.

You're young,
you're smart and
you're launching a
company that's
going to radically,
instantly change
the world.

There's only one
problem, and it's a
doozy: you have
absolutely no idea
what you're doing.
It's time to call in...

THE adult IN THE ROOM

BY LISA MARGONELLI ♦ ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CORIO

a

n electrical engineering degree and a dream. That's all Russell Rive had when he arrived in Silicon Valley via Pretoria, South Africa. It was 1996, and Rive was 23. "It's the only place in the world where you can be young," he had told his little brother, Lyndon, "and people will take you seriously." Then, two years later, he had his idea—his *blammo*, lightbulb-worthy, *Pinky & the Brain* idea that would change the world forever, and make him a fortune in the process. ♦ Lyndon, then 21, happened to be staying with his older brother while competing in the World Underwater Hockey Championships (popular, as they say, everywhere but here) in San Jose. Lyndon had sales experience, peddling herbal remedies on a grand scale. One mention of Russell's idea, and he could no longer concentrate on hockey—or fathom staying in Pretoria for much longer. Everdream was born.

Everdream uses the Internet to help small businesses completely manage their desktop applications. Elegantly simple. Elegantly brilliant. So simple and brilliant that it took an electrical engineer and an underwater hockey player less than three weeks to get a funding deal with Draper Fisher Jurvetson, perhaps the hottest venture capitalist firm in the Valley. That was on May 11, 1999.

The money men had only one stipulation. Being young and hot and able to work all night is one thing: steering a company from two people to 40 and crashing the market by November 1999 is another. The days when Bill Gates—types could grow into the job are long gone. "In Internet time," says Matt Williams, 27, who founded online auction site LiveBid.com three years ago, "you don't have time to prove yourself. You have to do it faster and better than anybody else before you get crushed by the competition." There was only one thing that could get the Rives where they needed to be in six months: a CEO. "Someone who's been there and done that," explains Lyndon. They needed gray hair—and they needed it fast.

Dad. Coach. Babysitter. Field marshal. Rock star. Queen bee. Steve Jobs. Chairman Mao. The young founders get all the ink, but behind many of high-tech's biggest success stories lies the proverbial "adult in the room." They try to downplay it, but Pierre Omidyar at eBay has his Meg Whitman. Jerry Yang and David Filo of Yahoo have their Tim Koogle. And so on. People talk about the obsolescence of managers who didn't grow up with computers, but at the very top of the pyramid, all these young start-ups have, ironically, shot up the demand for old guys. VCs, angels, boards of directors, even founders themselves: everyone wants someone with the real-time experience to stay cool when the kid-founders are all stoned on start-up dope, working day and night toward launch.

By some estimates, there are as many as 400 high-tech-company chief executive searches going on in Silicon Valley—perhaps five times that figure across the country. Shopping for a CEO has become as much a part of the start-up process as writing a business plan and hustling for dollars. "If Hewlett Packard and Compaq have problems finding

CEOs," says Julie Daum, comanaging director of U.S. Board Services in New York, a division of the headhunting firm Spencer Stuart, "imagine what it's like for companies with smaller revenues."

So the brothers Everdream compiled a list of the qualities they wanted in their adult: Someone who knew the Net and the hardware market. Someone who knew the consumer market, too, because Everdream would be dive-bombing into a relatively mature area. Someone with a gigantic Rolodex full of potential hires. Someone with the stones to storm onto the national stage without getting crushed by the competition. Someone who could make the company big and make sure everybody received health care. Someone who wouldn't stutter when the *Wall Street Journal* called. Sweet Jesus! Someone who could keep the VCs happy.

And then there were the intangibles. They would be working with this guy 24-7, so the brothers actually had to *like* him. They had to feel that he respected their vision and wouldn't try to take the company away from them. He had to have "gray hair and a young soul," as Russell explains. He needed to be fun, and someone who wouldn't freak out if you told him his idea was bad. "[We wanted] someone who, if you're feeling bad, he'll push you up," Lyndon says. "Someone who'll take care of you more than just businesswise. Someone like a father or a brother."

It's May 12 and the Everdream boys are reviewing résumés, making calls and setting up interviews. They compile a list of questions: What will you do on your first day on the job? What do you think of the CEO having a private office? (Trick question. The only acceptable answer: "No way.")

Candidate one is just too dumb. Candidate two thinks Everdream is a great idea, and he wants to put the whole thing on a CD and sell it in chain stores. Candidate three says, "Don't worry. I know exactly what you're thinking. Trust me. I've been doing this for years." Candidate four pontificates, "No offense, but I've been in this longer than you guys. And you guys are a little young, but let me tell you this..." Russell makes a noise like a circus clown falling down a slide.

"No way," he says. "Just because he's older than us doesn't mean he can disregard our opinions." After a few more candidates come and go, the boys decide they need help.

They approach Andreas Stavropoulos, their VC at DFJ. Stavropoulos offers a lesson in interviewing. "If I ask someone who knows you, 'What are the two words you'd use to describe him?'—that really gets to the soul of the guy right there." Still, candidate five's two words don't cut it. Candidates six through twelve fly by like slices of expensive processed cheese: great résumés, but no personality. The brothers decide to choose the first person who gives them immediate "warm fuzzies"; the person so perfect they don't even have to discuss it.

But by now it's almost June. The clock is ticking. One morning, Lyndon remembers that a VC from a DFJ competitor had given Russell the number of a potential CEO candidate a month ago. Lyndon digs through the laundry and produces a card: just a name and a phone number. No title, no curriculum vitae, no specifics at all. He leaves a very enthusiastic message on Gary Griffiths's home answering machine.

HOW TO SHOP FOR A CEO



A Checklist for Finding the Right "Adult"

This is what Jennifer Fonstad, partner at Draper Fisher Jurvetson, looks for in experienced CEOs.

- ♦ **STRONG FIT** A good match must exist with the CEO's experience base, personal skill set and personality, and the company and its market space.
- ♦ **HIGH ENERGY** Building a company and motivating a cadre of high-performance people requires a CEO with immense energy and demonstrated enthusiasm—even on the late-night shift.
- ♦ **QUICK MIND** The CEO must be someone who learns quickly, adapts quickly and toggles well between the forest and the trees.
- ♦ **SCALABILITY** The CEO must be able to grow as the opportunities and the company grow, manage the increasing complexity of the company and demonstrate an ability to understand and anticipate what challenges growth brings.
- ♦ **MOTIVATION** Hunger is a virtue as well as a necessity: the CEO must exude passion and a true "fire in the belly" to build a company and stick with it.

he stories of culture shock surrounding new CEOs and their young executive charges are by now legendary. Sky Dayton, the founder of EarthLink, even convinced Garry Betty, fifteen years his senior, to go snowboarding with him. More often, though, the CEO-to-be shows up in a suit and the founders give him a tour of an office tangled with networking cable, old Coke cans, downed routers and a few grizzled programmers wearing skate shorts. Every founder has his idea of how he'll test the new guy on the block, the instant alpha male of the office.

Ari Jacoby, the 23-year-old cofounder of Newsletters.com, has been searching for a CEO for six or seven weeks, reviewing hundreds of résumés, looking for the right high-profile, experienced candidate with "rock star" charisma. "Will he be up at 3 AM wrestling with the code with us?" he wonders. A good question to ask, in Jacoby's book: "Wanna go with us to see the Dave Matthews Band tonight?" A bad answer: "Who's that?"

Underneath the bravado lies tension. Young company founders are scared of getting the wrong person—someone who will kill their baby or take it away from them, to name just two examples. The pure up-all-night aggression that it takes to be a founder is different from the shrewd, political ball-busting aggression that it takes to be a CEO; but the common thread is aggression. The worst marriages of founders and CEOs end up like car wrecks beside the highway. One example is Infoseek, where founder Steve Kirsch and CEO Robin Johnson clashed and the company suffered as the competition whizzed by.

Still, many great marriages get off to rocky, tense starts. William Martin, the 21-year-old creator of Raging Bull, the upstart investor community site, interviewed Stephen Killeen, 36, at the suggestion of CMGI, the Internet giant that invested in them. "Before we got funding," says Martin, "Dave Wetherell of CMGI asked me if I was thickheaded enough to think I could bring the company to an IPO on my own. I said I wasn't. The deal with CMGI set it in stone that we'd get a CEO."

But he was still nervous. When Killeen, who had years of experience with Fidelity Investments and DLJdirect, arrived for the interview, Martin tried to stress Killeen out. "I just laughed at him," Killeen remembers. "I said, 'Don't even try that. I've been in much harder situations.'" Martin giggled, admitting, "It was worth a shot." The sparring broke the ice, and the founders and the potential CEO came to see each other as people who could work together.

A year later, they're happily married. "Within two weeks I was happy he was here," Martin remembers. "He took burdens off our shoulders." Better yet, as Killeen took over running the company, he assigned Martin and the other founders jobs they were suited for and nurtured their talents. Still, Martin likens him more to a babysitter than to "adult supervision." "He makes us fill out expense accounts and pick up our pizza boxes," he says. "But he's crazier than us."

On May 28, Gary Griffiths, 48, drives to Everdream's office, which is tucked between a few trailer parks on the outskirts of Redwood City. The place is small, hot and messy. Griffiths has no idea why he's been called or what Everdream is. He's not even sure of the name of the company. But since he left his job as CEO of SegaSoft two months earlier, he's been at home daytrading like a fiend, a lost soul surrounded by a bunch of monitors. Like the gunfighter in an old western, he needs to be dragged out of the pool hall to get back in the saddle again. (Plus, his wife thinks it would be a good idea if he finds something "stable.") So Griffiths schedules the interview in the late afternoon—after the market's closed.

Within minutes, Lyndon Rive gets those warm fuzzies. Griffiths has seventeen years experience at IBM doing things like working on the ThinkPad, but clearly he wasn't entrenched in IBM's button-down culture. Then he spent three

for a barbecue. The brothers talk about giving everyone ballroom dancing lessons. The honeymoon has begun.

ahhh, the honeymoon. Joe Kraus, 27, cofounder of Excite, remembers it well. Back in 1996, he hired George Bell, an executive with Times Mirror and a former producer of nature documentaries, as employee number 23—and CEO—of Excite. Three months later they went on the road to promote the company before the IPO. "I thought we had a great tag team," Kraus remembers. "George lent credibility, because he was older and he had experience in traditional media. And I knew the Web." But after the IPO, as the company grew to its current size of 1,685 employees, their relationship changed. "The company grew and accelerated way beyond my understanding of the business. Me, him and the company have been through a lot of changes." That's an understatement. In April 1999, Excite was acquired by @Home, and now Bell is second-in-command of Excite@Home. Three years after Kraus hired Bell, Bell hired Kraus to be the vice president of content.

From Bell's point of view, the whole experience has been a wild ride. He joined the company, even though it was a long shot, because he liked the manic energy of its founders. "You'd have to put them in the hospital to get them to stop working on this dream," he recalls. But the founders' senses of ownership changed as the company grew: some left, Kraus stayed. "Joe was the salesman, he knocked down doors to found Excite," Bell says. "Then he cedes control of the company to me, has many roles, none central, and he has this wandering period in the woods." At the time of the merger, Bell says, Kraus had a "personal epiphany" and decided to devote himself to becoming CEO material by taking the vice president position. The relationship evolved in Internet time—crossing generations, private and professional roles, and warping beyond reckoning. "In a way," Bell says, "I had to prove myself to him, and now he has to prove himself to me."

The good news here: you can't choose your dad, but you can choose your CEO.

back at the ranch, Everdream returns from its first corporate trip to Costco. Cans of Diet Coke, apple juice and cold Starbucks coffee clank into the new fridge. A monster pack of microwave popcorn gets tossed in the cupboard. All six employees and the CEO stand around, staring in wonder at the rows of cans. Griffiths reminisces about the real old days, when he was on a navy attack submarine. The Rive brothers are already getting nostalgic: this is the first evidence that they're a real company—real CEO, real employees, real fridge. Within a month they'll move to a new office with room for a hundred employees. It's going to be a wild and crazy ride. Anything—anything—could happen.

Lyndon and Russell Rive are already dreaming of other start-ups they will form and launch with Gary Griffiths. That is, of course, just as soon as Everdream changes the world.

Lisa Margonelli is a staff writer at P.O.V.



WHO'S THE BOSS? How can you tell Russell (left) and Lyndon (right) from CEO Griffiths? The CEO is the one wearing the tie.

years at SegaSoft—managing the start-up and steering it toward a dominant position in online gaming. What's more, he's fun. When he hears Everdream's business plan he starts pop-pop-popping with ideas. He takes the Rives' ideas and pushes them further; he tells them how to realize the visions they thought were pipe dreams. He respects them. As soon as Griffiths leaves, Russell and Lyndon Rive high-five each other. He's the one.

Griffiths goes home that night and tells his wife about the two great energetic young guys he'd met—almost the same ages as their own sons. He likes the idea because it's "so big and so bold." He also likes the notion of getting in at the very beginning of the start-up. And one more thing: "Short runway. Great opportunity. Very high risk. If it doesn't work, we won't be sitting in here four years from now saying it'll work in a few more years." Griffiths laughs. "I'm too old for that."

A week later, Draper Fisher Jurvetson gives the nod, and Stavropoulos starts negotiating Griffiths's contract. On a handshake and a promise, Griffiths starts work. Almost instantly he feels the bond between the Rives and him go beyond their roles as founders and CEO. "There was a trust that we've never talked about," he says. At the end of the first week, he invites the staff—now five—to his house in the hills

To verbally spar
with the opposite
sex, you have to
learn to give as
good as you get.

**C'mon, punk.
Make her day.**

FLIRTY HARRY

By Jenn Shreve ♦ Photograph by Roderick Angle



Peter is looking to score. ♦ The scene: a warm night at the Casanova, a hip watering hole in San Francisco's Mission district. Inside, Peter saunters up and tells the bartender he'd like to buy a drink—anononymously—for a pert blond sitting with friends at a nearby table. ♦ “Why don't you just go introduce yourself?” asks a heavysset dishwater blond, alone and brooding within earshot. Peter explains that he just wants to make a nice gesture. No strings attached. The interloper isn't having any of it. “Women like to know who's buying their drinks,” she says, delicately avoiding the fact that she has no need to spend time wondering who bought hers. She has a point. For a minute or two they discuss methods of picking up women. Peter walks away. ♦ Meanwhile, the pert blond has gathered up her things and is

heading toward the door. Peter cuts her off at the entrance. “Don't leave,” he says. “I want to buy you a drink.”

She pauses a second. Then she looks at him and states, with heart-chilling iciness, “Whatever,” before strutting out the door.

OK, you're thinking, *ouch*. But wait. It gets worse.

Just as Peter is about to give up and head home solo, in walks the mother lode: a birthday party of drop-dead gorgeous 22-year-olds. Peter is all over them like a hacker in the CIA's mainframe. He grabs himself a party hat (first mistake) and starts chatting up a leggy, doe-eyed number named Molly. Things are progressing nicely, or so he thinks, so he offers to buy her a drink. “I'm taking care of a lot of people in my family right now,” she responds. “I don't know if I can take care of anyone else.” Peter buys her a drink anyway.

It's assumed that to effectively flirt you have to be in a bar. The truth is that **there are few places worse.**

His reward? She mocks him to her friends as she gulps it down. It's only strike two, but Peter is out. There will be other bars, other women, other nights. On paper, this handsome, non-drug-addicted, sweet 28-year-old is a great catch. But while it would be easy to chalk his bad night on the town to run-ins with two bitches, the truth is somewhat more painful: Peter is a lousy flirt. And unless he can brush up on his flirting skills, he will face endless nights of surly women, big bar tabs and restless sleep in a perennially empty bed.

There is a fine line between expert flirt and romantic putz. Most guys brag how they're the Rico Suave of the flirting world, but in reality the facts are a little less flattering. Among my friends, rare is the occasion that a man approaches one of us and doesn't get blown off. You may massage your wounded ego by dismissing us as snobs, but that's not true. This much is: you can be the best-looking man in this hemisphere, make more money than Bill Gates, be smarter than Einstein and more sensitive than the Dalai Lama, but if you approach me with a line—I don't care how witty, sly or funny you think it is—you're outta here without so much as a second glance.

So how does one approach a beautiful woman and not come off as an idiot? As with ballroom dancing or a perfectly choreographed flea-flicker, flirting is an art. It is learned through observation and perfected through practice. A few have the innate skills to flirt successfully without so much as a dress rehearsal, but most of us must learn to flirt

before we can get results.

In the animal kingdom, each species has its own elaborate mating ritual. Birds sing. Blue-footed boobies dance. Certain kinds of snails initiate courtship by shooting darts at each other. Humans are more complicated. There is no prearranged set of behaviors that will guarantee some action. We have eye contact, hot-and-heavy e-mail exchanges and social lubricants such as alcohol. All of these play a part in that elusive art known in finer circles (albeit Edwardian finer circles) as coquetry. At the core, there are only a few basic steps.

Good flirting is a two-way street. Pickup lines fail because they're one-directional, one-dimensional bullets aimed at another person who is considered little more than prey. Artful flirting is an *interaction* between two people, one which elevates everyday conversation to a new level. An introduction is no longer a mere “nice to meet you”: it is a playful *quid pro quo* between two parties interested in getting to know one another. It is an escalation—the work-related e-mail that turns into a friendly back-and-forth about the boss's outfit, then a discussion of weekend plans.

My friend Richard, 30, was recently flipping his plate at a gourmet salad bar when he bumped elbows with an attractive woman to his left. “Left-handed,” she said, smiling. Instead of mumbling, “Excuse me,” and moving on to the arugula, Richard laughed and said, “Yeah, it's tricky being left-handed. I've knocked sushi right off of people's chopsticks. I'm dangerous.” Richard has a girlfriend, so he wasn't about to take things further. But if he'd wanted to, he was off to a good flirting start: a chance everyday incident opened up into an exchange worthy of Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. He could have chatted long enough to ask for the woman's number. And probably gotten it.

Nicole, 26, says she gets called a flirt all the time, when she's really just a good conversationalist. “When I go out I talk openly, ask people questions about themselves, let them know a little about me. It's the real conversations you take with you.” The lesson for you: practice makes perfect.

Take it slow. Francesca Gentile, a coach who holds workshops on improving people's flirting skills, compares it to dancing—only with the woman in the lead. She sends a signal, perhaps a smile or eye

contact. The guy responds with a gesture in kind. Then he waits for the next move. If it doesn't come, the dance is over. If she sends another signal, the dance continues. Accept one hard-to-swallow fact: almost always, women are in control in the flirt game.

That's why Peter's timeless tactic of buying a woman a drink, no matter how well-intentioned, doesn't work. "He's too strong," Gentile admonishes. "By just jumping in front of women, he's invading their territory. Even for the best-looking guy, that would be threatening," Gentile goes on to add that "any woman knows she can get a guy to have sex with her any day. But she doesn't know if she could get a man to be in a relationship with her any time. To just jump in front of a woman, or to buy a woman a drink, implies, 'I'm going to get you drunk based on your looks.'"

Good flirting is never goal-oriented. If you are looking for a relationship, to get laid or merely to stuff your ego, it's going to come across in how you flirt. And there are few things less attractive than somebody who overtly sends a signal that he wants something. Like Richard's chance encounter at the salad bar, most flirting doesn't lead to anything consequential, but it should always leave both parties feeling better about themselves.

One of my best flirting memories is of a gorgeous fellow who approached me at a bar with an invitation to see his band. I asked what kind of music he played, and before long we were engrossed in conversation about music, work, life, the universe, whether Budweiser was making a comeback. I went home that night feeling attractive, smart and truly charmed by this self-assured stranger. A week later, I showed up to see his band play, only to learn from his friends that he had a girlfriend. But I wasn't upset. He'd made no promises on the night we met. We were, after all, just talking.

Of course, flirting done right can, and often does, lead to bigger and better things. At the end of a good conversation, you may want to ask someone out, or at least get a phone number. If it's clear through body language, eye contact and the tone of what's being said that both parties want to continue things, then offer *your* number. That way nobody's on the spot, nobody's desperate—just like good flirting itself.

Even flirting lightly with women you aren't especially interested in can be beneficial in the long run. "Women talk and they

have a really strong network," Gentile points out. "I wasn't interested in my boyfriend when I met him, but he had dated several of my girlfriends and they all said he was a really nice guy." She kept that in mind, and eventually the two got together.

Play up your best qualities. Never use some crutch, like a sports car. Ask a woman about her worst flirtatious encounter and inevitably it involves a line: the bozo in *American Pie* who parks his car, looks at his date and says, "Suck me, beautiful," is but one recent example of what not to do. Nicole remembers a guy who, after noticing her pierced tongue, asked, "Would you like another stud in your mouth?" She thought it was amusing. She also sent him packing.

One night at a corporate party, I was making small talk with a handsome CEO when he started persistently asking where I lived and if he could check out my bedroom. As I excused myself, he pulled me toward him. "Tonight's the night, baby," he breathed into my ear. I couldn't help myself; I cracked up in his face. It was funny; it was also insulting and pathetic.

If you know for a fact that you're a funny guy, then be funny. If you're attractive, then show it off with nice clothes. If you're intelligent, strike up a conversation on some recent scientific discovery that interested you and will hopefully impress her. Even better, when you meet someone, find out what interests her with lots of questions. Chances are, if there's common ground to be had, you'll find it if you're patient and interested.

Location, location, location. There's a general and gross misconception that to effectively flirt, one must be at a bar or a club. In reality, there are few places worse suited for artful flirting. Approaching a stranger in a bar or a club is about as subtle as a bitch slap: establishing the common ground upon which to launch a friendly conversation is difficult at best. There's no pretext to approaching somebody in a bar other than the obvious: *You're cute, let's go home and do it.* No wonder so many people end up asking, lamely, "So, you come here often?" Whereas at a party, you can ask pretty much anyone, "So how do you know so-and-so?" and be off to a good start.

As evidenced by Richard's short, sweet encounter at the salad bar, good flirting can happen anywhere. While eating at a restaurant recently, Peter put down the book he

was reading. A woman sitting near him picked it up and asked him how he enjoyed it. They started talking, and at the end of the conversation, she gave him her number. Flirting can happen at the gym, the supermarket, stoplights, in elevators, chat rooms—pretty much anywhere you might go. As with being an effective Boy Scout or not becoming an unplanned parent, the key to artful flirting is to always be prepared. You never know when you're going to meet somebody worth talking to.

Of course, it's one thing to itemize the steps to better flirting. It's quite another to hit the streets running. "Flirting is a behavior pattern. It's who we are, it's how we behave in the world," Gentile says. "It's not easy to change from an ineffective way of behaving to an effective way of behaving. It takes commitment—a commitment to become a great flirt and a better person."

Instruction worked for Peter. After some coaching by Gentile, he tried a new twist on his old tactics. While running across the street to buy cigarettes, he passed a bar and noticed two girls inside looking at him through the window. He smiled. They smiled. So he ran in and bought them drinks. Now here's the key: he then returned to the party he'd been attending across the street.

"I figured by the time I went back, they'd be gone," he recalls. "But they were there. I ended up talking with one of them for a little while. We had a lot of laughs, enjoyed each other's company. We ended up kissing and I got her number. It was nice."

Peter scored because of two things: he took a more low-key, casual approach and, despite getting his clock cleaned at the Casanova, he never gave up. Classes, books—even articles in men's magazines—can all help the average joe turn his flirting method into art. But, with rare exception, good flirts become so only with plenty of practice. So the next time you're getting gas, thumbing through fiction at a local bookstore or piling carrots onto your salad, be prepared to lay on a little of the old charm. Who knows? Practice could lead to perfect on the first try.

San Francisco-based writer Jenn Shreve once flirted her way through twenty dates in twenty nights for P.O.V.'s sister publication, Egg.



PAINTED **DEMONS**



The U.S. Army Rangers are the first troops in combat, the alpha males of the military, the most intensively trained soldiers in the world. But when ERIC BLEHM was granted unprecedented access to trail America's finest killing machines, he never knew how hairy it could get.

There's a saying among the United States Army Rangers: "We train like we fight." The numbers bear that out. From May 1, 1976, to October 30, 1995, Rangers fought in combat missions in Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf and Somalia. Nineteen men were killed in action. During that period, more than twice that many—39 Rangers, to be precise—were killed during training exercises. Thirteen died in aircraft crashes; eight died in parachute accidents; six drowned; six were hit by live fire; two died in bus crashes; one died in a fast-rope accident; one was asphyxiated; one was killed by demolition; one died when he fell from a tree.

Ranger battalions are America's most elite ground forces, our most highly trained killing machines. And they aren't just born that way. They train in arctic conditions, the jungle, the desert, the mountains and the sea, each situation intended to expose each man to every conceivable hardship. They carry the heaviest packs and travel the longest distances over the most difficult terrain. For four weeks each year they are granted block leave, a safety valve to relieve the pressure. Otherwise, all they do is train for combat. And in an average year, a couple die in the process.

There are many prestigious special forces in the military: Navy SEALs specialize in targeted covert maneuvers; Air Force Para-Rescue jumpers are famous for fetching downed pilots; Army Green Berets, of John Wayne legend, train the troops of other countries. But in terms of wielding sheer deadly force, none compare to the Rangers. They are America's finest assassins. Other special forces might get in and get out, but a Ranger's primary purpose is to seek out and destroy. "They're amazingly brave in a testosterone fog; they're warriors," Bill Brooks, a special forces Vietnam veteran, tells me. "Back in 'Nam, I'd feel safer with six Rangers behind enemy lines than with a company of infantrymen."

But in a time of booming job creation—and the resulting dearth of qualified army recruits—even the Rangers need to reach out. Accordingly, this May, I was granted the unprecedented journalistic opportunity to accompany a platoon through several days of its toughest training exercises—a mock war, in fact. In this case, the Rangers were deployed to intercede in a long-simmering conflict in the nation of "Rilea." Their mission? Raid a communications bunker at 0500 hours on May 17 as part of a coordinated, multipronged attack to knock out surface-to-air defenses and command-and-control centers, then seize an airfield so traditional infantry units could move in. I was classified as Embedded Media. My stated mission priorities were to observe, to photograph and to keep pace with the troops. But, truth be told, my top priority was to not get my ass shot off.

MAY 15, 1999, 1740 HOURS

I'm surrounded by guns: M4 rifles. Squad automatic weapons. M240B machine guns. A Carl Gustav antitank weapon. Grenade launchers. Sawed-off shotguns. The usual. I assist the 45 camouflaged Rangers in "un-assing" this fire-

power from three five-ton olive-green trucks. The Rangers scatter to their prearranged locations and form a full-court-sized semitriangle, with weapons pointing out into a tangle of thick forest that is the bulk of the small country of Rilea.

To my left is Specialist Brent Gillaspie, 20, five feet eleven inches and 230 pounds of big ol' Oregon boy. Nickname: Beefcake. Gillaspie played football and wrestled in high school and says he joined the Rangers for patriotism and adventure—and because he didn't know what to study in college. Specialist Marc Schmitz, 23, holds a four-year college degree. He was a champion swimmer. Then he became a stockbroker. Then he joined the Rangers in search of the kind of adrenaline and challenges that Wall Street just couldn't offer. Platoon Sergeant First Class Toby Boland, 32, was an army brat, growing up on bases from Georgia to Germany. For him, the military is a family tradition. The three of them are stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, part of 2nd Platoon Blacksheep, A-Company, from the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

MAY 15, 1745 HOURS

The road we came in on is secure, currently held by the Rilea Liberation Forces (RLF), a militia opposing "Astorians" who have moved to overthrow the legitimate Rilean government and occupy the country en masse. The Astorians have established key command-and-control centers and surface-to-air defenses, and have made it their general duty to torment the Rilean way of life. Peaceful negotiations have long since failed. That's why the Rangers are here.

Platoon leader Captain Kevin Cleary, 29, joins his Radio Telephone Operator Seth Ahrens, 21, along with four squad leaders and an observer. A topographic map of our Area of Operation is spread across the hood of a Jeep. While the squad leaders confirm our route and disperse information, I shadow Sergeant Boland as he walks the triangle, checking that each of his Rangers is covering the correct section of woodline and leaving no gaps in our defense. Everything is whispered through mouthpieces and earphones placed inside each man's Kevlar helmet (K-pot). Not a word is heard to the naked ear. Then, like a choreographed wave, three nine-man rifle squads peel out of the defensive perimeter and head down a misty junglelike road. The "Maggot Squad," consisting of three heavy M240B machine guns

(three men per gun), pulls rear security and follows with Sergeant Boland and our medic, Donnie "Doc" Stephens, 20, the lightest armed, with a Beretta M9 sidearm.

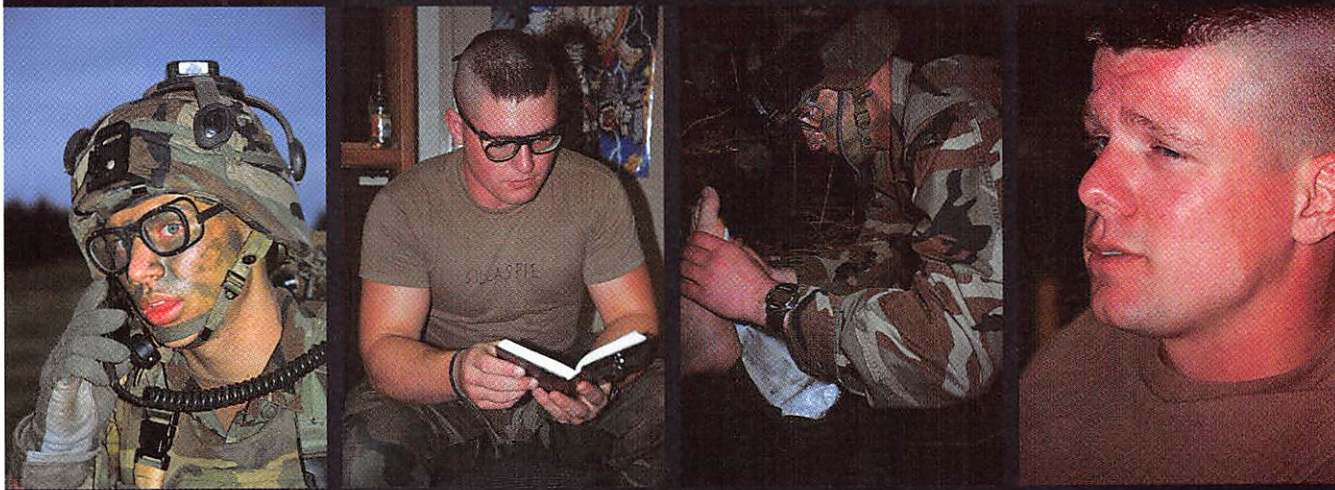
I trail Ahrens into Astorian-occupied Rilea in the second squad. There are fourteen men between me and the point team. Every man is staggered in formation along each side of the road. Between us and the objective is 20 to 30 miles of enemy-occupied roads, trails and ridiculously thick stands of trees overgrown with "wait-a-minute vines," bushes, thorns and the occasional cliff. It's a semirainforest, and the distance we walk depends on the accuracy of our route-finding skills and the frequency of enemy contact. We have 35 hours to reach and take our objective.

MAY 15, 1950 HOURS

The only gear that is my own are my boots and camera equipment. The rest is typical Ranger supplies: six quarts of

specialist Jon Powell, to my right, pauses briefly, leans forward and shifts his ruck forward and off his hips and shoulders with a quick jerk of the hips. I notice other Rangers following suit without losing a step, almost like a dance—the ruck shuck. Specialist Ahrens calls it "momentary relief from pain." It's a dance they learn during basic training, which is followed by advanced infantry training, airborne training and the Ranger Indoctrination Program (RIP). That's a total of nineteen weeks of borderline hell just to be considered a "tabless bitch" (a soldier who hasn't graduated Ranger School).

Ranger School is the real test—more than two months in which borderline hell heats up to full-on fire and brimstone. Extended patrols in mountains, deserts and swamps. Leadership drills. Low food, water and sleep. Extremely high stress. Merciless hazing (or what we civilians would call hazing). The training averages twenty hours a day. Typical weight loss during Ranger School is 25 to 40 pounds. Gillaspie tells me



PLATOON: Forward Observer Jason Henry; Specialist Brent "Beefcake" Gillaspie; Medic Donnie "Doc" Stephens; Sergeant First-Class Toby Boland.

water, four Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), a bag of candy and energy bars, a poncho, a Gore-Tex jacket, an insulating blanket, a bivy sack, the K-pot, a camouflage uniform and a Night Observation Device (NOD), which, at \$5,000 apiece, has altered the odds of modern warfare—and not in the favor of Third World nations. With artillery and ammo, the load comes in at 60 to 80 pounds.

All of this is contained inside a standard-issue, Korean War-era rucksack, which decidedly lacks the cushy kidney comfort of the backpack you have at home. The ruck feels good for ten minutes or so, before the meager shoulder straps dig in and your hands go numb from the weight. Rucks are hell on the body but easy to drop (a warfare must), and when you do, you're left wearing a utility belt that holds what you really need: lots of ammo, grenades, pen flares and a radio.

We're traversing the side of a mountain, passing through a partially logged section of trees. The sparse stumps make me feel exposed. The men seem more alert. Intermittently, Spe-

cialist Jon Powell, to my right, pauses briefly, leans forward and shifts his ruck forward and off his hips and shoulders with a quick jerk of the hips. I notice other Rangers following suit without losing a step, almost like a dance—the ruck shuck. Specialist Ahrens calls it "momentary relief from pain." It's a dance they learn during basic training, which is followed by advanced infantry training, airborne training and the Ranger Indoctrination Program (RIP). That's a total of nineteen weeks of borderline hell just to be considered a "tabless bitch" (a soldier who hasn't graduated Ranger School).

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MAY 15, 2100 HOURS

In Rilea, dusk is upon us, and time is becoming crucial. We've chosen speed over cover and are sticking to a myriad of logging roads. The point team leader, Sergeant Seth Bowen, regularly checks his Global Positioning System

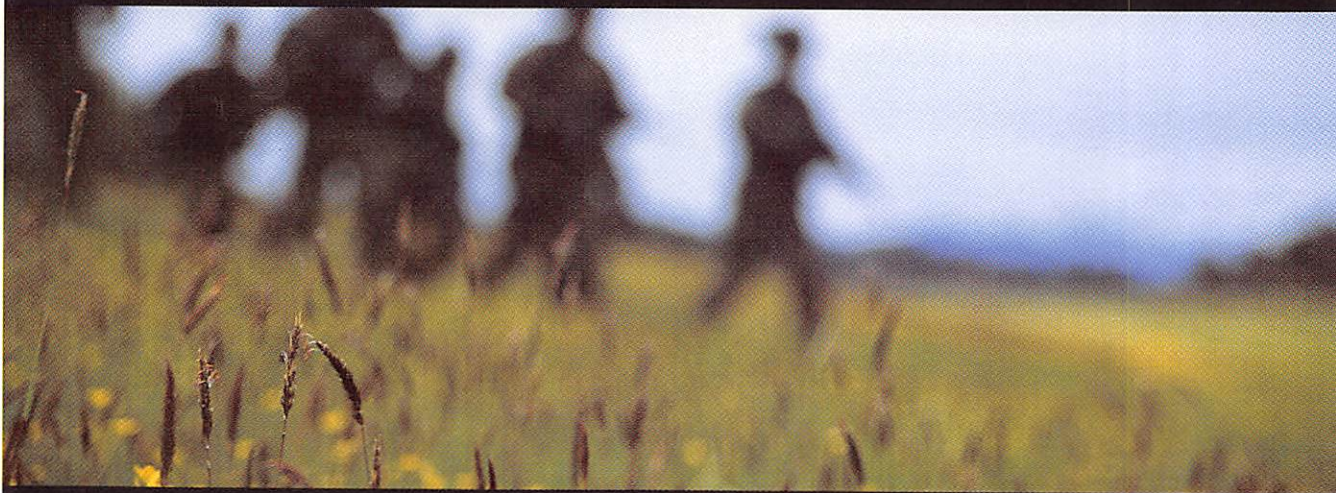
(GPS) to guide our 100-meter-long line. For so many men, the silence is astounding; they're like armed ghosts moving in for a haunting. Their demeanors are deadly serious. Their faces are painted and stern. I can understand why Rangers in Vietnam were called "painted demons" by the North Vietnamese Army and Vietcong.

MAY 15, 2110 HOURS

On a long tree-lined straightaway where the entire platoon is visible, I pass Sergeant Daryl Thies, 26, leader of the Maggot Squad, who is kneeling and counting us as we pass. Moments later, we're ordered off the road and into the darkened woods. It's NOD time. The goggles clip on to my helmet, two eyepieces suspended just above the bridge of my nose, and I nervously review my five-minute training. Some of the Rangers bear scars on their noses from running into trees, and even though it's not quite dark yet, I flip on the

Jason Henry casually stops and offers his ear. He seems completely at home in his little green world. I half crawl, half walk off the logging road and into tall grass and bushes. My own little green world is growing more comfortable, but I'm still forced to use meager clues to tell my comrades apart. Cleary has a map bulging out of one of his cargo pockets, and Ahrens has a spiral telephone cord dangling from his ruck. A knife-wielding Astorian could walk right up to me and I'd whisper "map check" to him before he slit my throat.

The squad leaders reconvene around Captain Cleary to check the map. They crawl under a poncho and I kneel alongside a bush a meter away. In addition to Bowen, Forward Observer John Powell and his Radio Man, Henry, also carry GPS units. Between the three of them "pulling pluggers" (checking our grid position), we supposedly know exactly where we are, and since nobody's been shot, we as-



THE THIN RED-EYED LINE: Fatigued Rangers must fight the urge to slip into the "drone," a crippling sleepwalk that can be as deadly as the enemy.

goggles anyway. I instantly become Predator. The night goes various shades of green; soldiers I couldn't see a minute before are now distinct black silhouettes; light green ferns glow fluorescent; water particles from a light sprinkling rainstorm sparkle and flash like static on a television screen. My world has become a small disorienting circle, like peering through a toilet-paper roll that's pressed up against a television screen. My feet feel ten feet away.

Someone taps me on my shoulder, bringing me out of my stupor. The line is moving back onto the road. He whispers, "Just focus on the guy in front of you for now. You'll get used to it." I start a minefield walk, probing each step for uneven ground, until I get smart and fixate on Ahrens's right knee just ahead.

May 15, 2312 HOURS

I bump into Ahrens. Hard. He grabs my shoulder and whispers, "Map check, pass it on." I turn around and Specialist

sume our presence is still unknown. The forward observers are ready to call in indirect fire—mortars, artillery, close-air support, whatever we might need. If we're compromised, they must direct highly explosive rounds to help defend our position without hitting us. These mortar rounds can blow up a tank or a bunker or a building. Human beings tend to get vaporized in the immediate blast zone.

Twenty-year-old Sergeant Nicholas Marchuk is manning one of those mortars. The night before, as I lay acclimating back in barracks, he had explained that, "I tell my friends why I joined up and became a Ranger, but they don't understand. People don't need to go into the military these days. The job market is good, college opportunities are good, where's the incentive? It's not the money." On a monthly scale, the average new private makes around \$887; a midgrade specialist, \$1,350; an E-7 sergeant, \$2,150. If you make sergeant major—there is only one per battalion—you earn all of \$3,150.

So why is he here? "Because I get my paycheck in my heart. I'm working with the best. The varsity team. I didn't want to be a 'justa'—justa car-wash attendant. Hell, even if I was wearing a suit, making big money, I'd be a 'justa.' Here? I'm serving my country and it's fun. Everybody has a competitive personality. If we take a run, it may start out fun, but at the end it's a race." He became solemn. "I want to parachute behind enemy lines. I want to shoot the bad guys in the face. I want it to rain, I want it to suck. I'll look over and see someone sucking wind and it fires me up."

"You mean, you really want to go to war?" I had asked.

"Well, it's not that I pray for a war, but you come here and you practice every single day. For years. Like you're training for the Olympics. You're ready. I mean, *really* ready. And you never get to play in the game. You never get to test yourself. So, yeah, in a sort of sick way, I do want to go."

At least one battalion (some 700 men) is always on alert in case that call comes. Within eighteen hours, an entire battalion can be en route to anywhere in the world. The official army definition reads, in part: "The Ranger Force provides a worldwide, strategically responsive strike force with a highly lethal ground combat capability...immediately committing military power on land into a threatened area. It can also conduct offensive, Direct Action operations...seizing airfields, performing raids and evacuating noncombatants. These operations are characterized by speed, surprise and violent execution."

"In other words," Captain Cleary says, "we're not a peacekeeping force."

MAY 16, 0118 HOURS

I feel myself starting to enter the "drone," a half-asleep, sometimes-walking state that can be just as deadly as the enemy. The rest of the guys have been conditioned to handle it. In Ranger School, they're given two MREs and roughly one hour of sleep a day for 72 days. As ex-platoon member Andrew Stern says, "The fatigue would start to get to me. I'd see signs ahead getting closer and then I would fall asleep. When I'd wake up, the sign would be far behind me and I'd still be walking. One time, I heard a Ranger up ahead walk off a cliff on the side of the road. I never fell asleep walking again."

I search for focus to keep myself going another five hours when suddenly a hand on my shoulder arrives from nowhere. It's Ahrens. "Personnel on the road! Off the road!" he whispers urgently.

The Rangers melt into the woods and I launch into a murky drainage ditch, firmly planting my face and NODs into a dirt embankment. Clutching at ferns and tree roots, I claw up and away from the road and next to a stump behind a tree. For ten minutes, I sit motionless and silent in wet vegetation. I hear only my heartbeat—then footsteps on the road. A column of men appears and I focus my NODs and watch them pass. Their weapons are clear, and in my hazy fog I'm suddenly convinced that it's my platoon looking for me because I'm lost. Better judgment tells me to shut up, but I start to panic. *Was I supposed to continue into*

the woods? What's going on? What am I doing out here? What an idiot I am. I wait, and wait some more.

"Eric, let's move out." I almost jump out of my skin. It's the stump. The stump was Ahrens, a foot away from me the entire time. He casually trots down to the road. I slide down on my ass and fall into place. Someone in the darkness whispers in my ear, "Nice job."

Word soon comes back that the unknowns were RLF, our allies, who informed us of a possible vehicle up ahead. Undaunted, we move on to Checkpoint Eight, where we cross into hot territory actively occupied by the enemy. It's raining harder. Somewhere, a light pulses—a search light or car lights being turned on and off—and things quickly turn sticky: a building materializes about 50 meters to our front; a truck approaches from our rear. Sergeant Boland immediately orders a hasty ambush: "Get a gun on this vehicle! Stop this vehicle!" But the truck stops before it reaches us, about 75 meters away, and...kills its lights? Tension mounts. A quick recon patrol checks out the building, which appears to be unoccupied, so we move out, passing it quickly—and very exposed.

Suddenly, automatic-weapon fire erupts like a bomb in my ears. I dive to the left side of the road, belly down, and peer back over my rucksack. The squad in the center of our column is engaging an ambush across the street and twenty meters behind me. I see flashes from its gun muzzles homing in on the flashes from the enemy. Seconds later, the shooting stops. The Rangers escape without casualties and, on a sweep of the area, discover two dead Astorians who are searched for Intel. We are ordered to move ahead quickly.

MAY 16, 0200 HOURS

We've been walking now for more than eight hours, when another phantom in the darkness whispers to me, "Who is that?"

"Me? Blehm."

"Who?"

"The journalist."

"Where the fuck are you supposed to be?"

"Right here, behind Ahrens."

The guy I'm following turns around: "Ahrens is back there somewhere. You're at the point."

"Shit! Sorry." I stop. Ahrens finally taps me on the shoulder, and I fall back into formation.

MAY 16, 0315 HOURS

A patrol base is scouted far off the road and we've halted. Priorities are, in this order: security, weapons maintenance, water, food, personal hygiene and sleep. Our perimeter is secured, "sniffle gear" (anything for cold weather) is donned, and we settle in for a couple hours of miserable sleep. The thin foam pad beneath my body offers little resistance to the sheets of rain forcing their way into my already-soaked uniform. Even Gore-Tex is worthless. As quickly as possible I pull an insulating blanket and poncho out and wrap them tight around me. I glance over at someone pulling security. His white teeth are grinning at me and I grin back, rain running like a river off my K-pot. *This sucks.*

MAY 16, 0400 HOURS

I realize I'm still awake.

MAY 16, 0500 HOURS

Ahrens is shaking me. Time to get up. Morning routine is already underway. I apply fresh camouflage where sweat and rain have erased the old. The Rangers dry shave. I pull out the tan MRE package marked "Menu #6, Frankfurters, Beef"—a.k.a. the "five fingers of death"—and slurp it down with a few swigs of mushy fruit salad chased by a couple pieces of army-issue gum. I rub the caked-on sleep muck from my teeth with a finger, swish water around my mouth and cross hygiene off my priorities list. Most Rangers have eaten and are shoving gobs of chewing tobacco into their lower lip. Many a Ranger could sustain himself for days on Copenhagen and a few cans of Mountain Dew in his CamelBak hydration pack.

Sergeant Boland approaches. "You get some chow?" His signature piece of mangled, white chewing gum hangs from the corner of his mouth while he talks. Somehow it stays put. It always stays put, holding on for dear life. Boland's exactly what you'd expect an army brat platoon sergeant to be: at 32, a little bit older and a lot more grounded than the gung-ho privates. Word on the street: "You either love him or hate him." He grew up at bases around the world, has been deployed twice, once to Haiti and again to Desert Storm, and he now sees building Rangers as his mission in life. As he walks along, he gently reminds his men in a southern drawl to, "Get a hand on that weapon! I don't want to tell you again!" Or, "Spread out! I don't want to tell you again."

"Certain Rangers have to be told they're the best," he later says. "You tell him he's the best, and eventually he tells himself. It's a mental edge. When you fight somebody, you have to have a mental edge. Either I'm stronger or I'm faster. I'm better trained. I'm a better shot. Some way I have an edge on this guy and I'm gonna exploit it. Gonna kick his fucking ass. We have to condition these guys so the first time they get shot at, they know immediately what to do. Instead of sitting there with their mouths open being scared, they react. It becomes instinct."

MAY 16, 1410 HOURS

The day has become torture: hours of boredom and a battle with sleep deprivation, interspersed with moments of hairy adrenaline. We've experienced another ambush. Another minor skirmish. No killed-in-actions (KIAs). A few bullets have whizzed past my head.

Now, wading through a waist-deep swamp and then busting brush up the side of a mountain, we're doing a damn good impression of a scene from *Apocalypse Now*. A few Rangers pull out disposable cameras for flashless shots, souvenirs, and I take advantage of this unusual halt to inspect my feet. They resemble a corpse's: chalk white and waterlogged. Twenty hours of walking and I'm already feeling the effects from both my wet load and my gnawing lack of sleep. Sergeant Boland asks how I feel.

"Fine. Good."

"You don't look it," he responds.

MAY 16, 2000 HOURS

Today, I taught myself a new game: I start counting steps to 100, then backward, then forward again; at a thousand, I reward myself with a swig of water. Not a particularly thrilling game, but it keeps my legs moving all the way to the base that we have made.

Our patrol base is nestled deep in the woods. Guard duty is divvied up, and as darkness sets in, I sneak just outside the perimeter to whiz. But instead of yellow, I see tomato red—blood. The dull ache in my lower back that I have dismissed for the past twelve hours has now escalated into a sharp, throbbing pain. Puzzled and nauseous, I consult Doc Stephens, the platoon medic, who is trying to repair a Ranger's foot that bears a deep bloody fissure. "Are you sure it's not just really dark?" he asks. "Have you been drinking enough water?"

Maybe that's it. I tell him I'll keep an eye on it.

May 16, 2400 HOURS

The platoon has moved steadily on to our Objective Rally Point just short of our target—the communications tower and enemy bunker. Somewhere off to the right, I can hear the pounding surf of the Pacific Ocean and smell the salt in the air—a reminder that, of course, this is only Oregon, just a training mission. It's easy to lose the distinction. Rilea is Camp Rilea. The Astorians are actually a U.S. Army Opposing Force used for training purposes. The guns are firing realistic blanks and SIMS rounds—gunpowder-propelled 9mm paint bullets—that can easily break the skin and will often lodge into flesh at close range. (Many a Ranger carries a collection of SIMS scars on his face and neck; genital shots, however, generally exhibit the most realistic casualty role-playing.) Regardless, my mind remains firmly entrenched in Rilea—and I have no desire to catch a bullet.

MAY 17, 0500 HOURS (H-HOUR)

Dawn. Men are creeping silently through the horizon's blue hue, when the whistle of a projectile passes through the air. *Kaboom!* The carnage has begun, on schedule. Up ahead, the morning is illuminated by white flashes and explosions. Mortars. Right on target. Lots of them. Deep-throated M240Bs come to life 300 meters to our right, ripping the compound's defensive bunkers to shreds—a carefully calculated system of cover fire. Punishing rounds light up the objective just ahead of our assault force.

My instructions are simple amid the chaos: move forward; find cover; repeat. A tower materializes against the horizon. An Astorian is shot. He writhes in pain in the tall grass. To our left, another Astorian flanks us and begins firing. SIMS rounds whiz past and Captain Cleary orders, "Somebody get on that man." Two Rangers peel off; the gunfire ceases. The forward observer calls off the mortar fire just before we hit the wire. One persistent Astorian jumps

out of a bunker to engage an approaching squad 40 meters to my right. He finally falls to his death, but not before wounding one Ranger with a shot to the arm.

We continue to move forward, always moving forward. The wire is cut. Rangers pour into the compound. I follow at a dead run, ready to throw my camera at any Astorian who might pop up from some underground firing position. The adrenaline of H-hour has masked the lingering pain in my back. Civilians scream in pain from wounds inflicted by the mortars and crossfire. I hear, "My arm! My arm!" somewhere in the tall grass. Down in a ravine, someone is yelling, "My stomach! My guts are hanging out, somebody help me! Oh god, my guts!" Moaning and howling persist as the Rangers breach the communications door, file in with the precision of a SWAT team and disappear up a stairwell. Moments later, they report, "Clear!" The compound is secure. The communications radio is destroyed.

ing? How will they react to accidentally killing an innocent civilian? That is the \$64,000 question when you're training men for combat. "That's one of the reasons we train like we fight. Target acquisition," Gillaspie says. "Once a Ranger pulls the trigger, it's too late."

I push the subject: But if you actually had to kill somebody, would any moral issues come up? "I don't think I would hesitate at all in completing a mission. If somebody is perceived as an enemy to my country, therefore an enemy to me, I would pull the trigger. I do think I may have some remorse afterwards, but that's not during the actual mission," Gillaspie says. "I mean, who *wouldn't* have any remorse? If I didn't have any remorse, I wouldn't consider myself human."

Says another Ranger, "If I'm sent on a mission and I do my job, I wash myself clean after the job is done. Whoever sent me there has to sleep at night with that decision."



FULL METAL JACKETS: Ahrens during night patrol; M240Bs at the ready; Sergeant Daryl Thies (center) conducts a map check.

MAY 17, 0520 HOURS

First aid begins: Each casualty is triaged, stuck with an actual IV and bandaged relevant to the injuries at hand. Mock painkiller shots are administered, and Doc struggles to keep up, while other men stabilize the wounded and pull them 300 meters on skedcos (casualty sleds) to a prearranged medevac location. With hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of training and equipment poured into each Ranger, the army takes lifesaving as seriously as life taking. During this training, Doc is evaluated by a senior medic, who watches him with a hawk eye. "If I'm screwing up, he'll make the patient deteriorate, drop his vital signs, give me another indicator of something else worsening. I have to react right then and there. I screw up too long, the senior medic will kill him."

All of which raises a fairly healthy question: realistic smoke, Hollywood explosions and all-too-real pain aside, how will these soldiers react to killing another human be-

MAY 17, 0630 HOURS

This particular exercise is now complete, but the training doesn't stop. Essentially, it never stops. Without so much as a breather, the Rangers launch into a stress-under-fire competition, where squads pull a 250-pound skedco from one firing zone to the next—running, heart pumping, shooting targets as far as 100 meters away along a 300-meter course. Men are graded for their accuracy and speed in killing human pop-up targets that peek from behind brick walls, slide across doorways and lie prone in the distance. Few of the Rangers miss—ever.

MAY 17, 1215 HOURS

We march a mile to a Quonset hut where a postaction review commences. Rangers are bleary-eyed, swaying in their seats. Afterward, I take another leak and am disturbed to discover that I continue to piss blood. My lower back is wrenched in pain. I am evacuated by truck to a local hospital. Apparently

my kidneys have been severely bruised, a condition endurance athletes occasionally experience. My white blood count is way up. I'm ordered home by the medical staff.

May 17, 9 PM

Back in San Diego, I hobble off a plane. At home I collapse into bed after a dinner of pizza and salad chased with cookies and milk.

MAY 17, 2100 HOURS

Meanwhile, Rangers train on. They have set up another patrol base and have now been ordered to hit an emerging target: the Astorian command-and-control center. At 2300 hours on their third day in the field they shift to urban warfare. Laser devices attached to rifles. NODs by cover of darkness. Confusing target acquisitions. Hordes of civilian noncombatants interspersed with enemy combatants. Mul-

will resort to various tricks—such as sitting on sharp rocks—to help them stay awake.

MAY 18, 2000 HOURS (H-HOUR)

More than 100 mortar rounds soften up the target buildings, but to little effect. M240Bs, the muscles of the arsenal, are used to systematically strafe and clear buildings one floor at a time. There are many Ranger casualties. Two Rangers are KIA. They "die," then get up to learn from their mistakes. Opposing forces are ordered to continue overwhelming the Rangers. Twenty Astorian Special Police approach the city. The army keeps pushing the Blacksheep's buttons. Linked directly with their squad leaders in the streets, Captain Cleary and Sergeant Boland direct operations from captured buildings. The more they're worn down, the more difficult the scenarios become—until finally, mercifully, the Astorians are defeated.



ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT: For America, another night of peace. For the Rangers, the fighting never stops.

tipple buildings to clear. Constantly changing Intel reports. More enemy. Less sleep. Deteriorating stamina. The Ranger platoon succeeds in clearing the city, and hands it over to the RLF.

May 18, 7 AM

I wake from a comalike slumber. Finally the bleeding has subsided. My feet are so swollen, I can't put shoes on. I eat two bowls of Cap'n Crunch, then rub away camouflage remnants from my face. My body has revolted after just one mission, and then I realize: *they're still out there.*

MAY 18, 0700 HOURS

Intel reports the city has been reoccupied by a much larger buildup of Astorians. Rations are low. Coiled razor wire surrounds the city. H-hour is set for dusk. By day, the Rangers lay low, avoid enemy patrols and observe the city. Fatigue is now a serious concern. Throughout the day, several Rangers

For more than 72 hours, the members of the 2nd Platoon Blacksheep have been taxed mentally and physically, with little sleep and almost no sustenance. Ironically, all of this—the endless training, the high six-figure cost per soldier—is invested for the purpose of building technical fighting machines with an average burnout rate of just three years. Once these men are gone, a constant flow of fresh meat will be molded into warriors who will learn to itch for the thrill of war—then often leave the army to become doctors, executives, politicians and policemen.

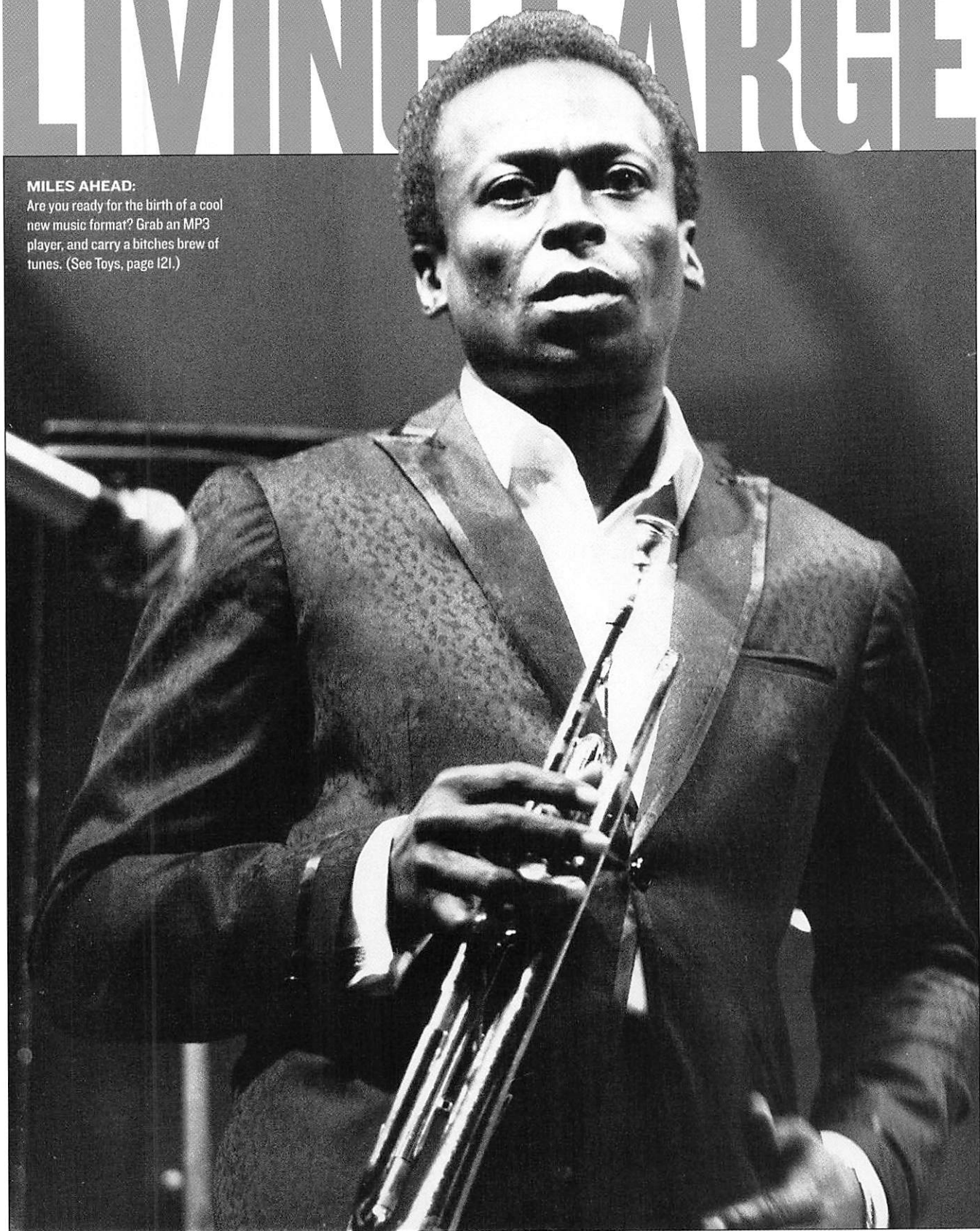
For now, though, all that matters to them is the chance to rest—before another grueling training session begins. Block leave is a month away. And there's more trouble brewing in Rilea.

Eric Blehm has written for Outside and GQ, and was the editor of TransWorld Snowboarding magazine. He is currently saving up for a pair of NODs.

LIVING LARGE

MILES AHEAD:

Are you ready for the birth of a cool new music format? Grab an MP3 player, and carry a bitches brew of tunes. (See Toys, page 121.)



DAVID REDFERN/RETNA LTD.

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Fantasy Island

Why waste your vacation on some tourist-ridden sandtrap? For the true Caribbean getaway, go with that blast from the past, Grenada. BY NELSON TAYLOR

The last time you heard about Grenada, you were probably still reading comic books. Remember? Iron Man Reagan sent troops down to the little island in the early eighties to save endangered American medical students (and, *coincidentally*, quash a Communist coup). Good news for the second-rate docs and incumbent rulers—but a public relations disaster for this tropical hide-away's tourism business. Those who like to dwell in the past continue to ignore Grenada. Those with an open mind, how-

ever, will find the best-kept secret in the Caribbean.

Need a picture? Close your eyes and imagine that you're on a plane descending over an island: picture wild green atolls anchored in sky-blue water...white-sand beaches brimming with European babes...skinny-dipping under giant cascading waterfalls...free-flowing local rum...killer West Indian cuisine...back-country jungle adventures...and water sports aplenty. Got the picture? And if that's not enough, it's cheap, too.

Before you jump on that plane, you should know where you're heading. Grenada, located at the southern end of the Windward Islands in the eastern Caribbean, is a small nation (independent from Britain since 1974) that consists of three islands: Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique. The namesake island is also the largest, with 120 square miles of lush jungle and rugged mountain terrain. Temperatures, as you'd imagine, range between 75 and 85 year-round. We're

DRINK LIKE A FISH:

Don't worry—on Grenada, there's plenty of rum (even for stunning a freshly caught fish).

talking ideal beach weather, twelve months a year.

My traveling bud and I were in a Marley-like mood within minutes of landing at Point Salines Airport. A glass of the island's potent rum punch didn't hurt our spirits. With a little buzz kicking in, we schlepped our bags to the street, found a taxi driver and slurred these two words: Grand Anse (pronounced AHnz), located in the country's capital, St. George's. This two-mile expanse is both Grenada's most famous white-sand beach as well as its best area for bedding down amid the center of the action. Decent waterfront digs can be had starting at about \$40 a night.

We plopped in front of the Grenada Grand Beach Resort, at the heart of the beachfront. Towels fanned on the soft, sun-warmed sand, I procured us a two-buck round of the local brew, Carib, from an under-21 beer hawker sitting with a body-sized cooler under a palm tree. Then we sat back, soaked in the sun and started scoping the scene for dinner dates. The best way to make a friend? Splurge on a Jet Ski, a Windsurfer or a kayak. There's nothing like trying to make small talk with a German bombshell in a string bikini while you're sporting impressive equipment (not to mention a Jet Ski).

Comely companion in hand, it was time to eat. Grenada is probably best known for being a spice island—some call it *the* spice island, which means the food is out of this world. Shacks selling delicious *roti*—think curried meat and potato burritos—are ubiquitous, and at between \$1 and \$2 a pop, they allow for lots of sampling. If you're feeling a bit decadent and un-PC, Patrick's Local Homestyle offers some serious native cooking. For \$15 you can get a 25-course meal (yes, you read right) full of fare such as turtle, goat and armadillo, plus staples like crab, crayfish, mutton and conch (or *lambie*, as it's called locally).

If you really want to impress her, taxi over to the Aquarium Beach Club, a breezy thatched-roof restaurant with a spectacular rockface view that reaches into the crashing surf. We started out with the best of the many piña colodas we sampled during the trip, and moved on to assorted fresh-fruit daiquiris, served in huge glasses. For eats, the coconut shrimp, the fresh

SPICE GIRL:

Excuse me, ma'am, but are you aware that there's a basket of savory, local spices on your head?



lobster and the garlic-rosemary Cornish hen all dazzled. The restaurant's private beach, like the whole country, has that surreal *Fantasy Island* air—perfect for a tête-à-tête. After dinner, head to the Fantazia 2001 Nightclub. Pay no attention to the cheesy name: this is the island's hottest music venue. Get sweaty pumping to the mesmerizing beats of live local soca, reggae, cadence and pan artists. Then, cool off on the beach for that skinny-dip with your dancing queen.

Rolling out of the rack the next morning, we chose to explore the island with a driver rather than renting a car or taking a tour. We lucked out with Darius, a bus driver turned cut-rate guide. He was an older man who seemed to know everyone on the island—for a C-note, we could control the daily agenda. With a pile of new friends coming along, this was both the most fun and most reasonable option.

Some of Grenada's greatest natural attractions are its waterfalls. Darius, filling us in on the local history the whole way, gladly took us to Concord Falls, a series of

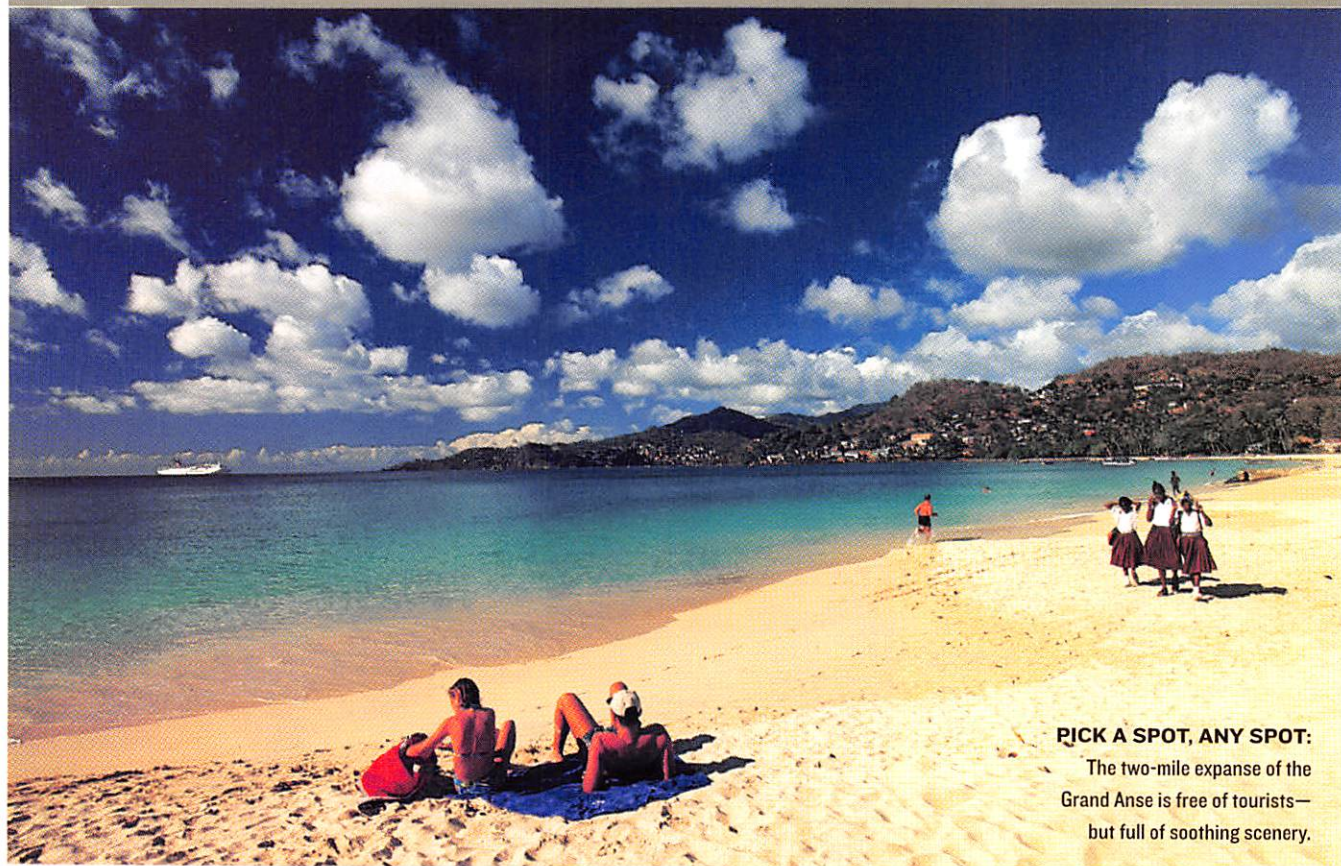
three beautiful cascading walls of water. As we drove up the steep inclines, the air got cooler as the jungle swallowed us. It was like ascending to some other-world fruitopia: bunches of green bananas, lemons, plums and breadfruit hanging from trees. Pungent aromas filled the van, and Darius kept pulling off the road, slicing off samples of cocoa, nutmeg and cinnamon sticks for us to chew on.

While you can drive right up to the first of the falls, it proved well worth the hike up a moist and sometimes treacherous trail to the final waterfall, Fontainebleu, where water gushes down a 65-foot cliff into a freshwater pool. After the two-hour climb, you'll want to break out of your briefs and hop in and enjoy the spray of falling water that is fresh enough to drink.

Just don't hang out too long, or you might miss the last tour at the nearby River Antoine Rum Distillery. This ancient fermentation factory, tucked deep in the hills above the eastern coastline, capped its first liter of grog in 1785. For the better part of the last two and a half cen-



CHEAP TRIPS



PICK A SPOT, ANY SPOT:

The two-mile expanse of the Grand Anse is free of tourists—but full of soothing scenery.

turies, they've been hand-producing this 150-proof firewater one batch at a time. This stuff ain't sipping rum, so make sure you have a cold Carib or a Coke on hand for a chaser during the obligatory tasting session. Locals shoot it straight and follow with water.

While Darius came beckoning most mornings, we were largely content to play in the water. Grenada is surrounded by teeming reefs (Molinère being the best), where snorkelers and scuba buffs can see parrot fish, spotted rays, large black coral trees and more. Certified divers shouldn't miss the wreck of the *Bianca C*, a cruise liner that sank in 170 feet of water off the coast of St. George's in 1961. If you're looking for some private time, several small islands have that deserted castaway feel, including Calavigny, and, most notably, Sandy. Locals boats will take you there for a small fee, or you can rent your own for around \$50 a day—but prices are always negotiable. Both islands have reefs aplenty (bring gear) as well as bugs (bring spray).

Grenada is also a sportfishing mecca. My buddy and I split a half-day trip for \$250, though the boat will hold six for the same price. We hooked a hundred-

pound wahoo and rescued a dead shark from an adrift longline, landing a seven-hundred-pound marlin would have been a whopper of a welcome end to our spice-island furlough. If you're lucky enough to catch one, you can sell that monster to the local fish market—and

earn back your airfare to that dreadful place called home.

Nelson Taylor is the author of the soon-to-be-published American Bizarro (St. Martin's Press), a traveler's guide to unique gatherings. This is his first article for P.O.V.

NITTY GRITTY INFO

WHEN TO GO Peak season runs from mid-December through April, with perfect weather and higher prices. June through early December brings rain, but while you can expect at least one day of rain during your visit, getting a little wet is well worth the bargains. Everything from hotels to drivers to snorkeling to deep-sea fishing are all about half of their normal prices. If you're not afraid to haggle, you can get many things even cheaper.

GETTING THERE You have to travel through San Juan or Miami to get to Grenada. Round trip on American Airlines (800-433-7300) from any major hub costs between \$420 and \$900, with a two-week advance purchase. At www.cheaptickets.com, you can get the same American Airlines flight for at least \$100 cheaper, depending on travel days and blackout dates.

WHERE TO STAY Off-season rates at the stylish Grenada Grand Beach Resort range between \$142 and \$202 per night (473-444-4371). But there's an unadvertised double-room rental with a private bath above Coconuts (473-444-4644), a beachfront restaurant, which can be had for \$50. Call early! In the hills just above Grand Anse, hotels such as the Blue Orchid (473-444-0999) and the Grand View Inn (473-444-4984) offer rooms with a view for \$50 and \$45, respectively.

WHO TO CALL Contact the Grenada Board of Tourism for more information (800-927-9554). Darius, the driver, can be reached at 473-440-6795; 1st Spice Divers (473-444-1126) offers good prices for snorkeling and diving trips off-season. A half-day sportfishing trip on the Reel Affair II (473-440-3669) goes for \$250, while a full-day shoots up to \$500.

MONEY MATTERS While your Uncle Sams are good most places in Grenada, the local currency is the EC. The exchange rate is about 2.7 ECs to the dollar. You'll get better deals using the local currency, because locals always round up the American greenback price. You can get ECs from any bank.

Game Daze

Looking for the pageantry and bluster of big-time college football? Then follow your blockers to Columbus, Ohio, and prepare for the nation's most passionate pigskin party. **BY ERIK BATTENBERG**

Autumn brings with it rites and festivities that say a lot about who we are. Election Day. Harvest. Thanksgiving. But we ask you this: Can there be anything more American than a raucous football weekend? Nay, a raucous *college* football weekend, full of pride, rivalries and homecoming? There are numerous

shrines where these sentiments can be witnessed in all their splendor. The sea of red Cornhuskers fans in Lincoln, Nebraska; the awe-inspiring subterranean bowl of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Penn State in State College; Notre Dame in South Bend. As a native of Columbus, Ohio, however, I can safe-

ly say that for the nonpartisan football fan looking for the ultimate back-to-school-type weekend, you'll do no better than a wild road trip to Ohio State University.

Biased? Not really. Any of the aforementioned schools can offer a thrilling college football experience, with all of its pageantry and guts. But none others offer it in the midst of a thriving city (metro area population: 1.5 million) that serves up such abundant nightlife, accommodations and non-football options.

This doesn't mean the pigskin takes a backseat—this place *lives* for OSU football, and when it's a home-game weekend, you can truly *feel* the excitement in the autumn air. OSU flags fly on every other car and hang above just



THE LONG WEEKEND



YOU AND 100,000 OF YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS:

The crowd is all sauced, the band is all brass, and the clothes are all scarlet. Welcome to Ohio Stadium.

about every front porch. The team's colors, scarlet and gray, are splashed on anything you can think of—including the faces of hyper-passionate locals. Walk in to any business during a game and you'll hear it on the radio or see it on the TV. Casually ask any man, woman or child about the team's new quarterback and you'll get an impassioned response.

OSU football is in Columbus's blood because it's been around for 110 years, and the team has always been at least good, often great. Naturally, there are lots of fun traditions around OSU football, and you don't have to be one of the Buckeye faithful to enjoy them. You just have to be someone looking for a good time. And have I mentioned how cheap it is in Columbus (especially the beer)?

Kick the weekend off on Friday night by fueling up. You'll find more food, drink and football than you can possibly handle at the Buckeye Hall of Fame Cafe (1421 Olentangy River Road, 614-291-2233). TVs everywhere replay highlights of great OSU moments, while fans wander along the "walk of fame" with names

of past Buckeye jocks. There are trophy cases all over the place, with footballs, jerseys, photos and other stuff, most of it autographed by former players.

The Buckeye's menu features chicken, salmon, jambalaya and the like, but all of that's minor-league fare when compared to the six steaks in the lineup. Locals prefer the "Buckeye Filet," topped with lump crabmeat and béarnaise sauce. Rare, of course.

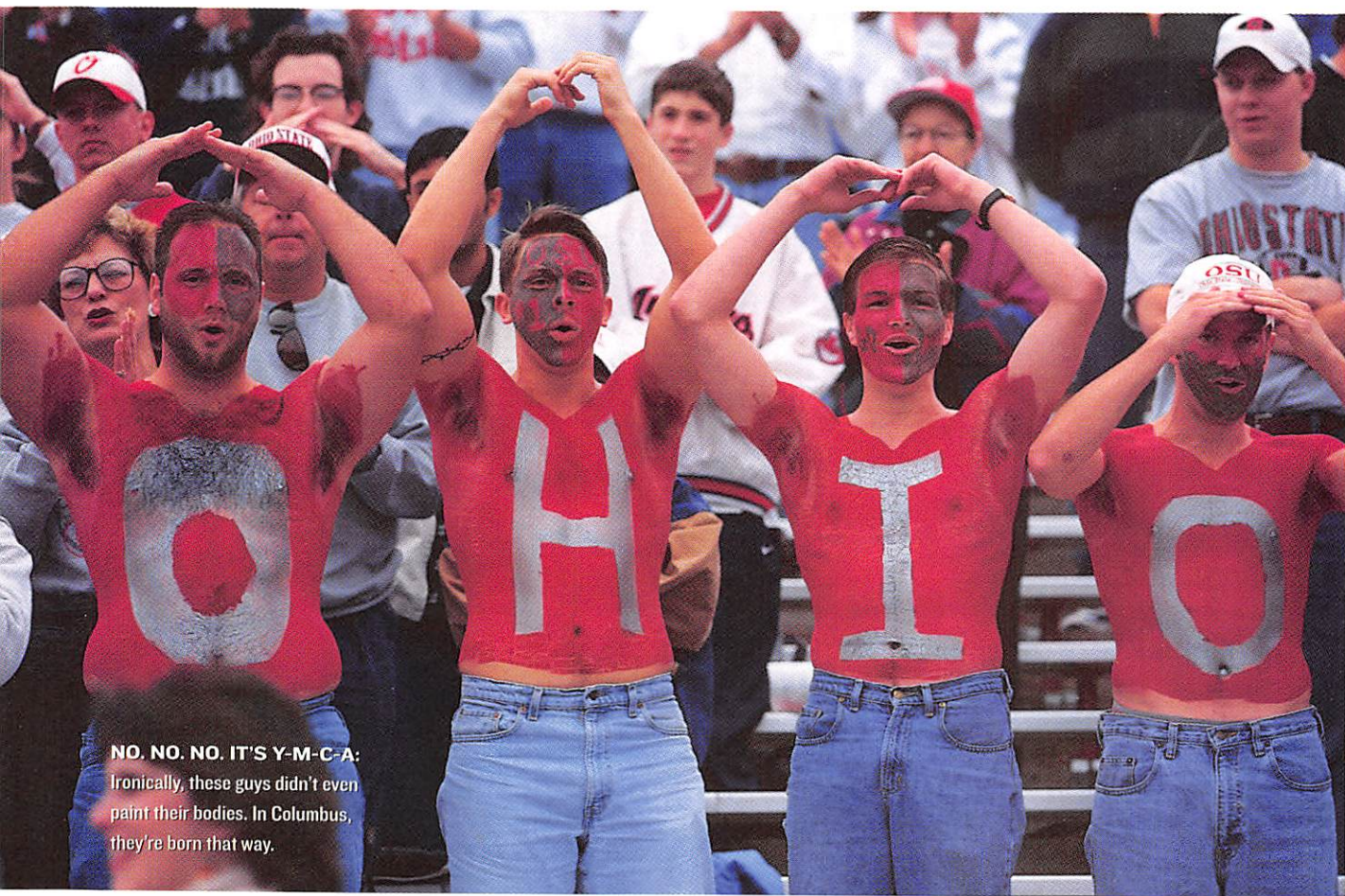
If there isn't enough sensory overload here, listen—and watch—as Kirk Herbstreit, the ESPN announcer and former OSU quarterback, hosts his Friday-night radio show a few tables away. After dinner, grab your beer (two bucks a pint!) and head to the "Arena Room," which offers dozens of high-tech video sports games—and hit another huge Buckeye bar. If you have a different game in mind, keep walking into the giant, garage-chic space that hosts a non-stop pep rally, complete with the OSU cheerleaders(!), a guy who does a good impersonation of legendary coach Woody Hayes and Brutus Buckeye, the

team's nut-headed mascot.

When the cheerleader of your dreams tells you she's going home to wash her hair, know that she means it, and head out to the Brewery District, just south of downtown. There, you'll find a cluster of bars offering live music, deejays and, as the neighborhood's name promises, plenty of good brews. Hoster's is a local favorite.

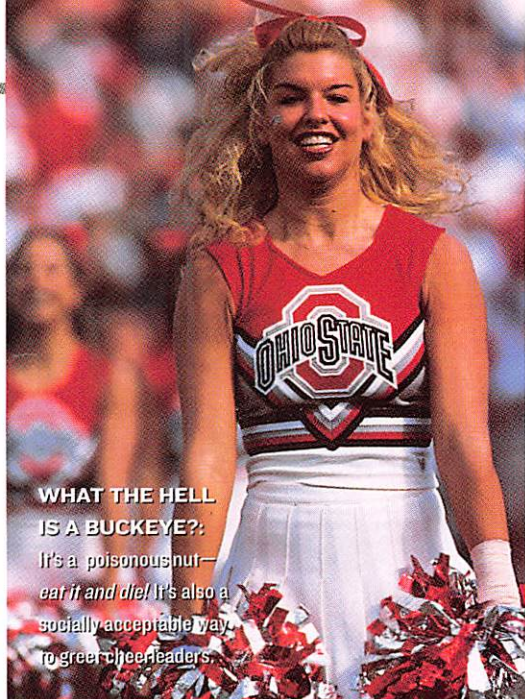
Game day festivities start early, so roll out of bed and head directly to Skully's Bar & Grill (1596 N. High Street, 614-297-4745) for "kegs and eggs," an OSU tradition for hard-core fans. If you oversleep and the kegs are tapped out, stick to Lane Avenue, where you'll find pregame fun aplenty.

Buckeye die-hards will wear just about anything team-related—even if it's only a tattoo. If you want to look the part, start at Conrads Gifts (316 W. Lane Avenue, 614-297-0497), where you'll find everything OSU, from hats to sweatshirts to buckeye-nut necklaces to, yes, buckeye leaf tattoos (you'll see lots of people with these on their cheeks, both above and



NO. NO. NO. IT'S Y-M-C-A: Ironically, these guys didn't even paint their bodies. In Columbus, they're born that way.

JAMIE SABAU



WHAT THE HELL IS A BUCKEYE?

It's a poisonous nut—eat it and die! It's also a socially acceptable way to greet cheerleaders.

down below).

Now you're ready to party—again! The parking lot in front of the Holiday Inn on the Lane (328 W. Lane Avenue, 614-294-4848) is home to the long-running "Hiney Gate," a pre- and postgame beer blast with live music and a livelier crowd. It starts raging four hours before game time. Another longtime favorite is the Varsity Club (278 W. Lane Avenue, 614-299-6269), an old-school, Buckeye-themed bar that extends its patio across a side street on game days. It, too, hosts live music, as well as the Bud Girls and other sideshow attractions. You'll find more kickoff parties walking east on Lane, including a big one in the parking lot of Tommy's Pizza (174 W. Lane Avenue, 614-294-4669). Basically, you can't go wrong at any of these places, so hit one or hit 'em all.

A popular pregame must-do tradition, dating back to 1932, is the OSU Marching Band's "Skull Session," a dress rehearsal of sorts that the band does an hour and 45 minutes before kickoff. Held in St. John Arena (410 Woody Hayes Drive), some 10,000 people watch the band (known as TBDBITL, which is pronounced like "tib-di-bittle" and stands for The Best Damn Band in the Land) play a sit-down concert of its pregame and halftime music. If you would rather get sauced than Sousaed, at least get to the stadium in time for the band's famous "Ramp Entrance," another tradition dating back to '32, in which the band enters the stadium with great

choreographed fanfare. It's almost as exciting as when the football team makes its entrance, sprinting across the field as the crowd roars.

With the game under way, the crowd, almost 100,000 strong, engages in call-and-response chants of "O-H" and "I-O." The band plays "Hang On Sloopy" and the audience sways to the rhythm. A fat and jolly fella known as the "Neutron Man" does his self-styled "Neutron Dance" at least once a game. And the home team—if all goes as planned—wins impressively.

What could possibly spoil all this excitement? There's no alcohol sold at the stadium. If you just can't wait it out, it's easy enough to sneak a flask inside your coat, but why not ride the natural high? There's plenty of time for drinking after the game, and the place to start is

back at the Varsity Club. Walk there for the first postgame beer as the Victory Bell rings from its tower at the southeast end of Ohio Stadium. Then, from the VC, head east on Lane Avenue, stopping at a party or two on the way, until you get to High Street. Don't worry about directions: just follow the crowd.

High Street is the wonderful road that runs through the heart of the city—as well as the campus district—and home to more bars than even you can conquer. You'll have a hard time finding beer sold in buckets these days—that tradition is fading—but you will find plenty of places packed with friendly faces enjoying cheap suds.

As you bar-hop south on High, pause at Twelfth Avenue to see if there's any rioting going on. (Did we mention these people are football crazy?) It's been a recent tradition, usually only after big games, for frenzied fans to overturn cars and set garbage on fire. It's best to observe from a distance, as the cops shoot



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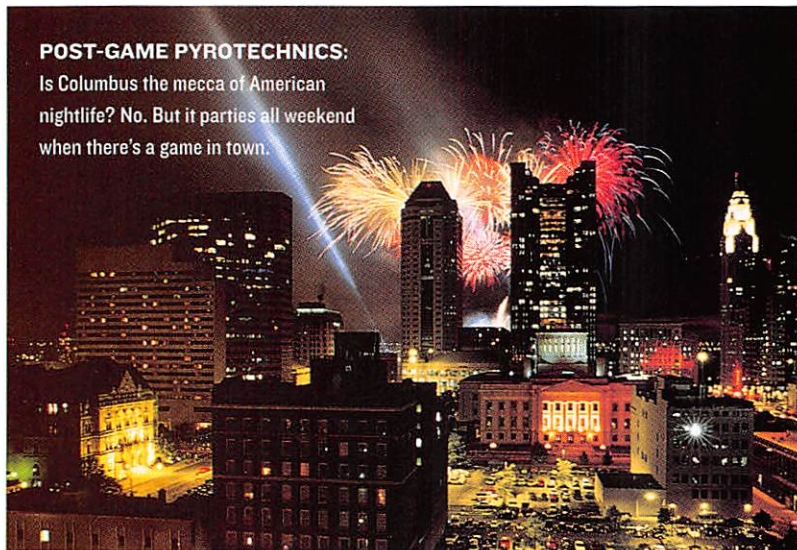
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LIVING LARGE

POST-GAME PYROTECHNICS:

Is Columbus the mecca of American nightlife? No. But it parties all weekend when there's a game in town.



"knee-knockers" into the crowd and make lots of arrests. Then keep going south, stopping at whichever bars catch your fancy. If you make it all the way to the 7-Eleven, you've done well. Now turn around, make your way back and go to bed.

Sunday's a day for coming down and seeing the city before heading home. If you'd like to look at German architecture and drive on streets made of brick, head to the city's German Village, south of downtown. Hit the hearty German buffet at Schmidt's (240 E. Kossuth Street, 614-444-6808), then walk or drive around the village, checking out the sites, shops and taverns.

If you prefer contemporary urban cool, Columbus-style, then the

Short North area is for you. The best brunch is at Frank's Diner, inside the North Market (59 Spruce Street, 614-621-2233). You can then walk over to High Street (same street as the day before, much different area) and head north. Once you cross the bridge, you'll see lots of art galleries, antique shops and such, and there are several bars to visit if you need a Bloody Mary to cure that hangover.

Just make sure you get out of town before Monday, when the city reverts to its laid-back, easygoing self.

Columbus native Erik Battenberg has written for Entertainment Weekly, The Onion and Time Out New York. This is his first piece for P.O.V.

NITTY GRITTY INFO

GETTING THERE Most major airlines—and some of the cheapies—will get you to Port Columbus International Airport. From there, it's a twenty-minute drive to downtown hotels.

GETTING AROUND Renting a car isn't necessary; from most hotels, your two feet or a cheap cab ride will get you around just fine, though you won't have much luck hailing cabs in this neck of the woods (Yellow Cab Co., 614-444-4444).

WHERE TO STAY The Holiday Inn on the Lane (328 W. Lane Avenue, 614-294-4848) is ground zero for OSU football action and therefore the best place to stay, and about \$100 a night in the fall. If it's full, try the nearby Fawcett Center (2400 Olentangy River Road, 800-637-2316), which will run you around \$70. Both have free airport shuttles. In a pinch, you'll find low-frills-but-acceptable accommodations at the nearby Red Roof Inn (State Route 315 and Ackerman Road, 614-267-9941).

WHAT YOU'LL NEED Tickets to the game. Try the OSU ticket office (800-GO-BUCKS). If the game's sold out—and it probably will be—try the classified ads in the daily paper, which can be found online at www.columbusdispatch.com. There are no scalping laws in Columbus, so you'll see people selling tickets outside the stadium as well—prices vary, so shop around.

Digital Audio Dynamite

As seen in our P.O.V. 100, the crisp, downloadable music format known as MP3 is on the move—from obscurity to everywhere. And with these gadgets, you can move from the desktop to your pocket—Walkman-style. **BY MARK SPOONAUER**



TOYS

▼ **ARTIST:** NOMAD

PRODUCER: Creative Labs

ADMISSION: \$250

PERFORMANCE: This magnesium-skinned mini (weight: 2.5 ounces) comes jam-packed with 64 MB of memory (providing up to two hours of near CD-quality music), four hours of voice recording and an integrated FM tuner with ten presets. The initial set-up is anything but harmonious (have you ever tried to fiddle with your PC's BIOS settings?), but bundled MusicMatch software makes downloading easier than picking up groupies.



► **ARTIST:** I-JAM

PRODUCER:

I-Jam MultiMedia

ADMISSION:

\$200

PERFORMANCE:

Taking a cue from a certain computer maker, I-Jam is available in ten different colors, including "groovy green" and "purple haze." The included Jam Station downloads singles in less than 60 seconds (depending on your Internet connection), but the player comes with only enough memory (32 MB) for a few one-hit wonders.



► **ARTIST:** RAVEMP

PRODUCER: Sensory

Science

ADMISSION: \$279

PERFORMANCE: The raveMP makes the most of its memory (64 MB), with music playback, voice recording, text downloading and even a digital phone book so you can keep in touch with 64,000 of your closest fans. Line-in jack lets you record your favorite guitar riffs while line-out lets you play MP3s through your stereo. Distinctive hourglass shape marred by tiny tune buttons.

Regular contributor Mark Spoonauer had a short-lived career as a deejay in college.

◀ **ARTIST:** DIAMOND RIO 500

PRODUCER: RioPort

ADMISSION: \$269

PERFORMANCE: RioPort's Swatch look-alike sports thirteen hours of battery life, 64 MB of memory (expandable to 96 MB) and an intuitive USB plug-and-play connection that eliminates the need for a docking station. Rioport.com, now in partnership with MTV, provides plenty of exclusive content (sorry, no *Real World* clips). Backlit LCD display pleases, but poorly marked side buttons are dimmer than Britney Spears's lyrics.



The Day After

Put off your doomsday preparations till the last minute? Here are five items that might save your ass in case of chaos, and will prove handy even if the apocalypse is not dated January 1, 2000. **BY GLENN DERENE**



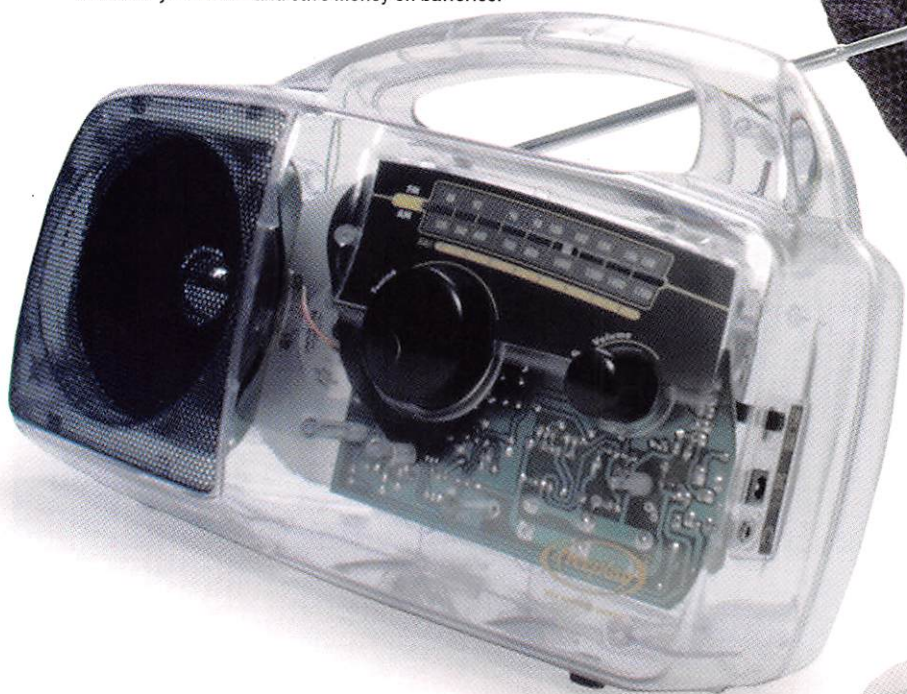
GEAR

▼ FREEPLAY SELF-POWERED RADIO WITH SOLAR

PRICE FOR SURVIVAL: \$79.95 (914-258-5660)

WORST-CASE SCENARIO: When the electricity grid fails, the Freeplay radio is a must-have, because it's powered by a crank or by solar panels; 30 seconds of cranking will give you one hour of music listening. Of course, if the radio stations lose power, then 30 seconds of cranking will give you one hour of static.

BEST-CASE SCENARIO: It's perfect for camping or the beach. You can listen to tunes wherever you want—and save money on batteries.



▲ SAFEWATER ANYWHERE

PRICE FOR SURVIVAL: \$34.95 for half-liter bottle; \$39.95 for one-liter bottle (800-675-4401)

WORST-CASE SCENARIO: Colossal computer screwup mixes global water supplies with global sewer systems. Tap water becomes bacterial playground and tastes awful. SafeWater's take-anywhere squeeze bottle has a dual filtration system that rids water of 99 percent of pesticides and bacteria. Unfortunately, water will still taste like crap.

BEST-CASE SCENARIO: Tap water in most tropical vacation spots is already a bit dicey. SafeWater is easy to pack and will save you from Montezuma's revenge.

► YOU CAN SURVIVE

PRICE FOR SURVIVAL: \$14 (877-324-7867)

WORST-CASE SCENARIO: Computer miscommunication between United States and China causes accidental global thermonuclear war. Head for the basement with this little can, which contains such survivalist essentials as sugar packets, matches, fuel pellets, Jolly Ranchers, instant-broth packets and a fizzy energy drink—plus, the can itself turns into a stove. In short, all that's needed to keep you alive for, say, a day or two.

BEST-CASE SCENARIO: It's New Year's morning, year 2000, the world is still intact, but no stores are open and you have a vicious hangover. You're going to be opening every can in the house looking for grub.



Glenn Derene is a regular contributor to P.O.V.

► **LEATHERMAN
FLAIR**

**PRICE FOR SUR-
VIVAL:** \$70
(800-847-8665)

WORST-CASE SCENARIO:

You're the man. Where are your tools? Biblical flood forces you to build your own ark, but you lent most of your equipment to an old college buddy. Leatherman Flair packs seventeen tools (knife, pliers, scissors, screwdrivers and more) in one foldable package.

BEST-CASE SCENARIO: With its waiter-style corkscrew, cocktail fork and condiment knife, the Flair might single-handedly carry wine-and-cheese-style sophistication into the 21st century.

▼ **GARMIN GPS III PLUS**

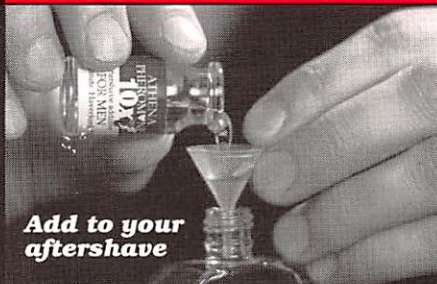
PRICE FOR SURVIVAL: \$571.80 (913-397-8200)

WORST-CASE SCENARIO: Rioting in the streets makes you head for the hills. The GPS III Plus has detailed maps of the Americas preloaded, and displays them on a 1.5-by-2.2-inch backlit screen. It fits in the palm of your hand, and is waterproof to boot. Provided the millennium bug doesn't down the GPS satellites, this device will help you find your way while you forage the woods for food.

BEST-CASE SCENARIO: You were never really that good at following directions anyway. The GPS III Plus's built-in street and highway maps will keep you on track, and optional CD-ROMs enhance the detail with worldwide maps and additional street and stream information throughout the Americas.



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Simply Red

Understanding the nuances of great red wine needn't be a complicated matter. **BY ANTHONY GIGLIO**

When sommelier Joshua Wesson opened his first wine store in New York City in 1996, he and his partner, Richard Marmet, had one simple goal in mind: make wine as fun to buy as it is to drink. Their store, Best Cellars, quickly achieved national acclaim, for two reasons: first, the pair offered only about 100 different wines, all priced \$10 or less; second, instead of categorizing wines according to country or grape, they grouped them by color and taste. Looking for a light red? Head over to the "Juicy" section. Something more powerful? Grab a bottle from under the "Big" sign. Ingenious.

Wesson and Marmet's formula has paid off: they're now in the process of opening Best Cellars outposts around the country. And while other retailers have been slow to react to Best Cellars' method, restaurateurs from Maine to Arizona almost immediately began to rethink how they write their wine lists. And with good reason: How often are you confronted in a restaurant with the intimidating task of choosing a wine from among dozens—if not hundreds—of selections? Now, instead of trying to figure out whether a Bordeaux or a Burgundy will go best with your steak, many menus direct you to choose a "Hearty Red" to land you in the right neighborhood.

Alas, most restaurants and almost all retailers don't want to make it that easy for you. So you need to know how to read the signposts yourself.

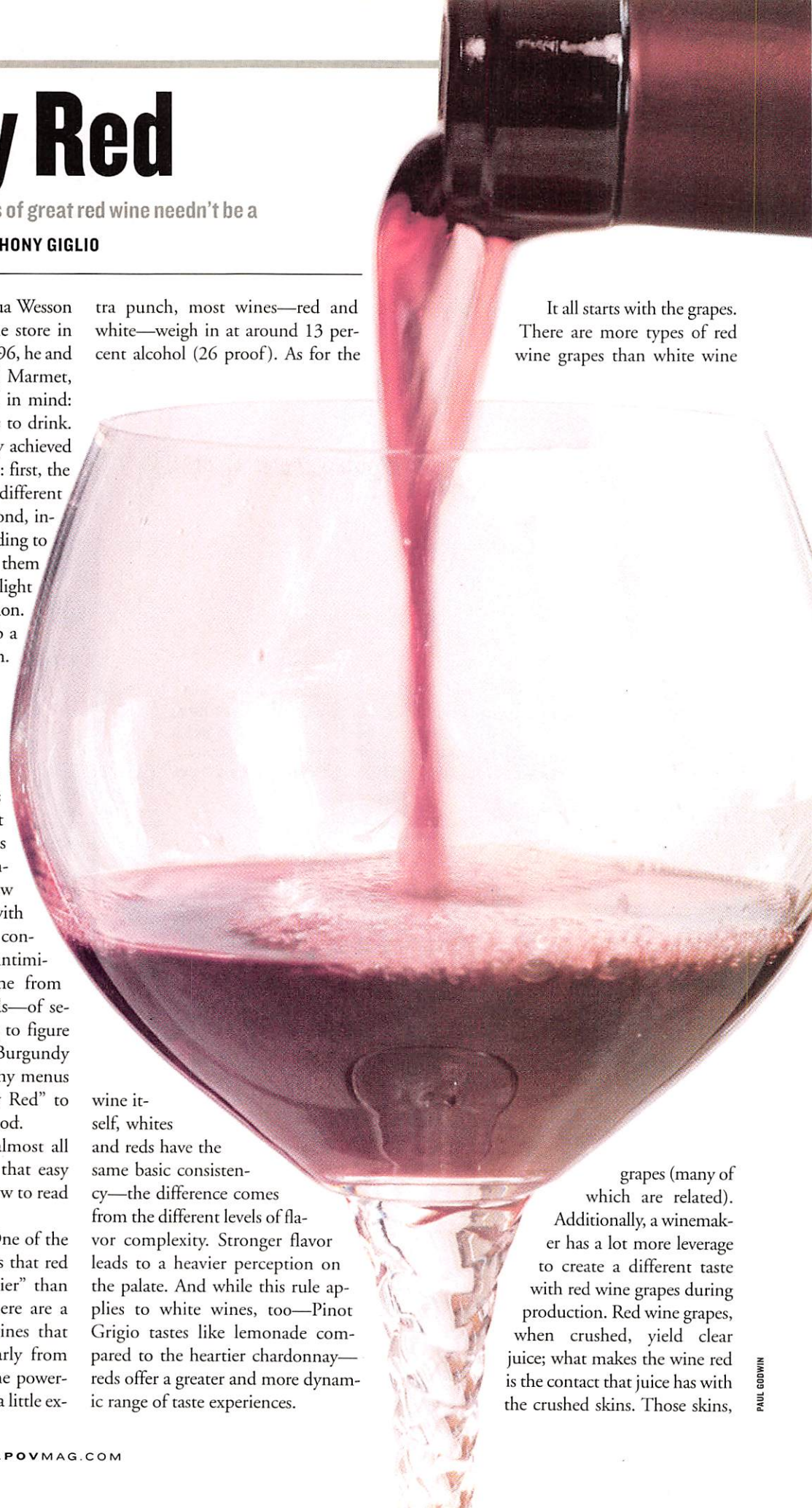
First, some myth-breaking. One of the most common misconceptions is that red wine is more potent and "heavier" than white wine. False. Although there are a very small number of white wines that come in a little light, particularly from Germany and Portugal, and some powerhouse Italian red wines that pack a little ex-

tra punch, most wines—red and white—weigh in at around 13 percent alcohol (26 proof). As for the

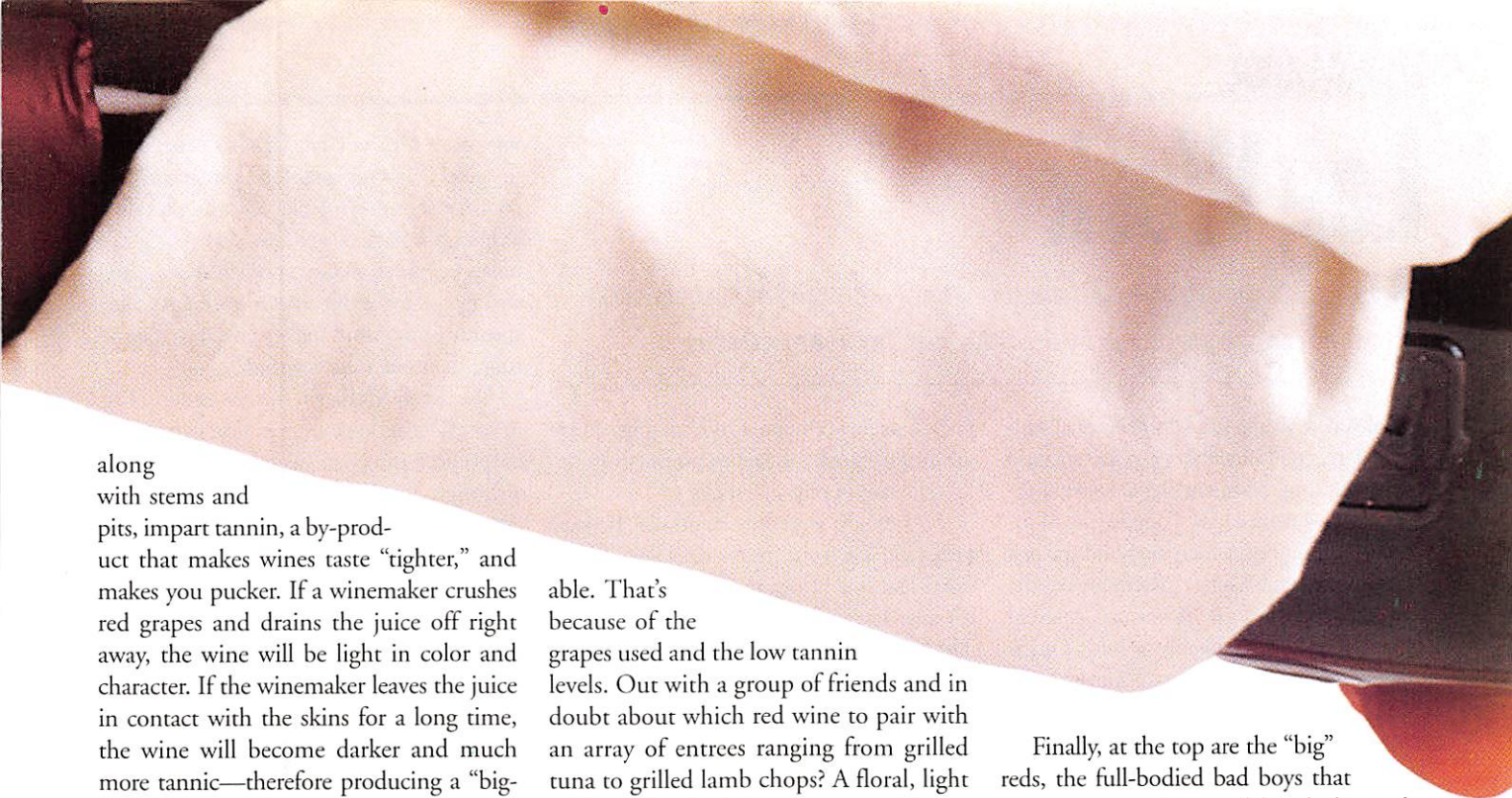
wine itself, whites and reds have the same basic consistency—the difference comes from the different levels of flavor complexity. Stronger flavor leads to a heavier perception on the palate. And while this rule applies to white wines, too—Pinot Grigio tastes like lemonade compared to the heartier chardonnay—reds offer a greater and more dynamic range of taste experiences.

It all starts with the grapes. There are more types of red wine grapes than white wine

grapes (many of which are related). Additionally, a winemaker has a lot more leverage to create a different taste with red wine grapes during production. Red wine grapes, when crushed, yield clear juice; what makes the wine red is the contact that juice has with the crushed skins. Those skins,



PAUL GODWIN



along with stems and pits, impart tannin, a by-product that makes wines taste “tighter,” and makes you pucker. If a winemaker crushes red grapes and drains the juice off right away, the wine will be light in color and character. If the winemaker leaves the juice in contact with the skins for a long time, the wine will become darker and much more tannic—therefore producing a “bigger,” more complex taste.

Make sense? Then you're well on your way to understanding the subtle-but-confusing differences among red wines.

Get it straight, and you'll never be flustered again when it comes time to dither over wine. To help focus things even further, we've adopted the three categories that Wesson and Marmet came up with to categorize red wines [see box].

Basically, “juicy” wines are lighter: fruity, crisp, simple and instantly drink-

able. That's because of the grapes used and the low tannin levels. Out with a group of friends and in doubt about which red wine to pair with an array of entrees ranging from grilled tuna to grilled lamb chops? A floral, light red is a fail-safe choice that goes with just about anything.

EATS & DRINKS

Next up the flavor ladder are “smooth” wines: medium-bodied, velvety, graceful and refined. A quintessential example of a smoothie is the insanely popular merlot, a somewhat weighty American wine whose secret is that it often packs more fruit than tannin. What distinguishes a smooth wine from the others is that it is weighty on the palate but doesn't bulldoze your taste buds.

Finally, at the top are the “big” reds, the full-bodied bad boys that are concentrated, powerful and ultimately satisfying. These monsters aren't known for subtlety: they deliver flavor in waves. The faint of heart (that means all you chardonnay boys out there) should progress toward “big” wines only after working up through “juicy” and then “smooth” wines. It all makes sense on paper; it'll make even more sense in your mouth.

To combat heart disease, of course, Senior Editor Anthony Giglio drinks half a bottle of red wine every day.

PARTING THE RED SEA				
TYPE OF RED WINE	EXAMPLES	TASTE QUALITIES	DRINK THEM WITH...	
JUICY 	Beaujolais from France; dolcetto from Italy; young American pinot noirs	Strawberries, raspberries, cherries; bright acidity; refreshing	Seafood, vegetables, pastas (with either of the above or with tomato sauce) and both white and red meats	
SMOOTH 	Rioja from Spain; Chianti from Italy; Côtes du Rhône and young Burgundy from France; American merlot	Dark fruit flavors (plums and blackberries) and aromatic spices (cloves, cinnamon)	Roasted chicken, meaty fish (grilled tuna or salmon) and any red meat	
BIG 	Bordeaux and Châteauneuf-du-Pape from France; Amarone and Barolo from Italy; American zinfandel and cabernet sauvignon	Lip-smacking black fruits: black cherries and black currants; hints of smoke and cedar, as well as earthy, coffee flavors	Rich, robust meat dishes: rack of lamb, dark game (elk, caribou, venison) and thick grilled steaks	

For specific recommendations for “juicy,” “smooth” and “big” red wines, click to www.povmag.com.

Leg Work

OK, Bluto, it's time to build up your lower body—before you tip over. Just follow the routine perfected by the Utah Jazz. **BY JORDAN MATUS**

Even if you're not a professional athlete, you know that you can't succeed at a single extracurricular sport without powerful legs. They are the foundation upon which we build the rest of our powerful bodies. Remember: the flamingo may be one of nature's graceful miracles, but you probably wouldn't want one posting up in the paint. Same goes for

you. Your powerful pecs and bulging biceps are all for naught if they're propped up on legs the size of popsicle sticks.

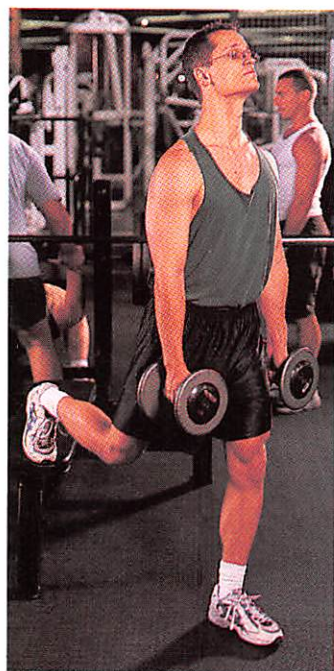
So how do your legs stand up? If your kneecaps are your most defined features below the belt, it's time to rebuild your stilts.

The best route? Compound exercises. Mark McKown, who as strength and condition-

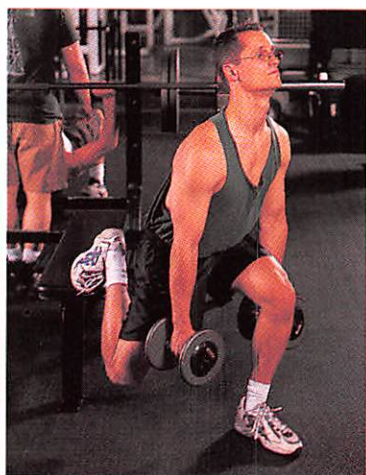
ing coach for the Utah Jazz has toughened up Karl Malone and John Stockton for countless age-defying playoff runs, says that although isolation exercises, such as leg extensions, may make your muscles *look* stronger, "for explosive movements like sprinting and jumping, you need to recruit more than one muscle group."

We asked McKown to recommend the most effective leg exercises that can be incorporated into your usual workout. And although he didn't state this explicitly, we're convinced this workout is the one thing standing between you and a lucrative NBA contract.

Jordan "Skinny Legs" Matus writes about fitness regularly for P.O.V.



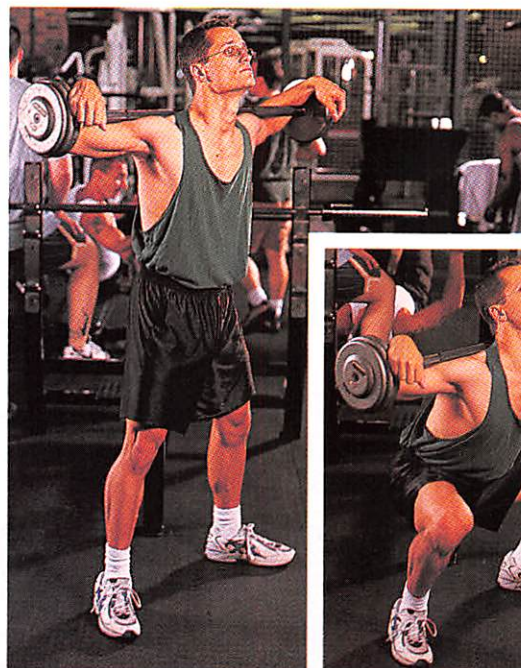
THE RULES: Do three to four sets of each of the following exercises. If the movements feel unfamiliar, get a trainer to watch you during your first few attempts to make sure your form is correct. And if anything causes sharp pain, stop immediately, because chances are you're doing something wrong.



EXERCISE: BULGARIAN SQUATS

WORKS: QUADS, HAMSTRINGS, GLUTES

Holding a dumbbell in each hand, rest your right leg behind you, the foot elevated in a comfortable position on a bench. Plant your left leg forward about three feet, with your head erect and torso straight. Slowly dip toward the floor, bending your left knee and keeping the right leg still. Once your thigh is parallel to the floor (don't go any further or you risk injury), hold the bend for a second and then return to the starting position. Repeat ten to twelve times, then reverse positions and work the other side.



EXERCISE: SUMO SQUATS

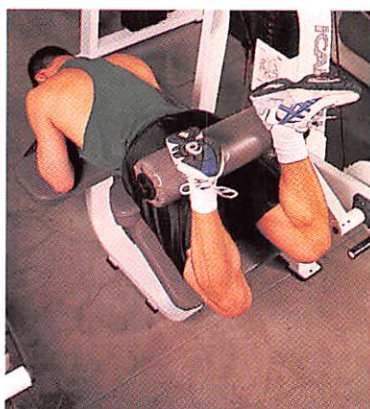
WORKS: QUADS, HAMSTRINGS, GLUTES

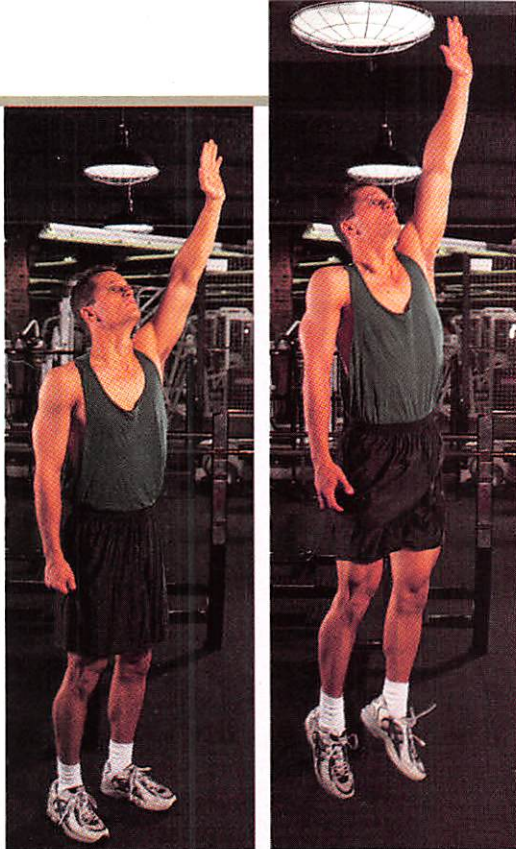
This is a more knee-friendly and back-friendly exercise than regular squats, McKown says. Stand erect with a barbell placed evenly above your shoulder blades. Position your feet as wide apart as is comfortable (certainly wider than shoulder-width), toes pointed outward. Keeping your head up and back straight, slowly squat until your upper thighs are parallel to the floor. Freeze in that position for a second, then slowly rise to your starting position. Repeat ten to twelve times.

EXERCISE: HAMSTRING CURL

WORKS: HAMSTRINGS

This is the one isolation exercise in McKown's workout, to give the hamstrings a little additional work. Lying on your stomach, hook your ankles under the lifting pads of the hamstring curl machine. Your knees should be hanging just over the edge of the bench with your legs slightly bent but otherwise fully extended. Focus on keeping your pelvis pressed against the bench as you slowly curl your legs up, bringing your heels toward your butt. Stop when your legs are bent to about a 90-degree angle, hold for a heartbeat, and then slowly return to the starting position. Repeat ten to twelve times.





EXERCISE: STANDING JUMP AND REACH

WORKS: CALVES, QUADS, GLUTES

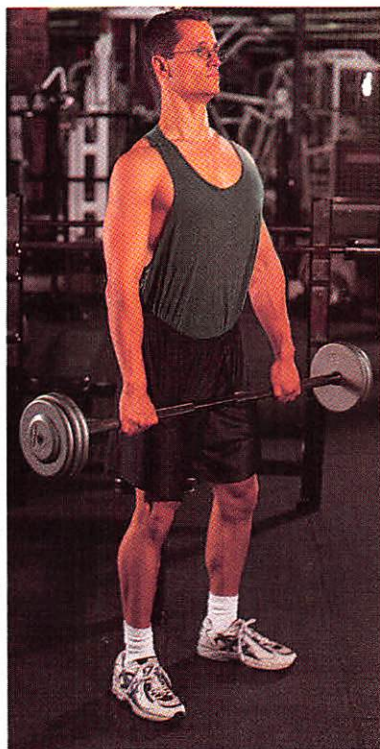
Stand upright, your feet roughly shoulder-width apart, with your right arm dangling at your side and your left arm pointing toward the sky. Keep your knees slightly bent. Jump upward as high as you can, reaching for the roof with your left hand. When you land, repeat, this time lifting your right hand. Repeat 60 times, and increase that number as you grow stronger.



EXERCISE: STABILITY BALL HAMSTRING CURLS

WORKS: HAMSTRINGS, GLUTES, SPINAL ERECTORS

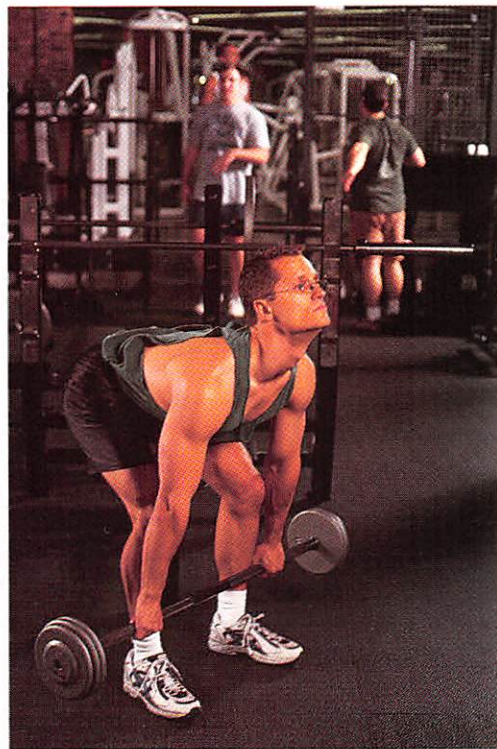
Most gyms now have stability balls, and they're great tools for improving balance and body awareness, two things that will definitely help your game, McKown says. Your first step is to get used to the ball by doing a couple sets of bridges. Here's how: Rest with your back on the floor, your feet resting on top of the ball. Then straighten your body, elevating your hips, making a bridge between your shoulder blades still touching the ground and your feet resting on the ball. Hold for a second, then return to the starting position and repeat. As soon as you've mastered that movement (it may take a few sets), move to the next level: Once you're in the bridge position, keep your hips elevated and bring your heels toward your butt, rolling the ball a few inches toward you. Return to the bridge position and repeat ten to twelve times.



EXERCISE: ROMANIAN DEADLIFTS

WORKS: GLUTES AND HAMSTRINGS

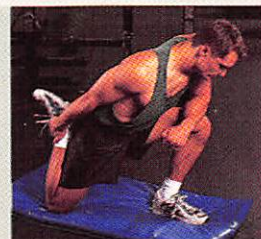
Stand straight with your knees bent slightly, holding a barbell in front of your waist with your arms straight. Your butt and chest should be stuck out, your shoulder blades back. Slowly flex at the waist, keeping your back straight and the barbell close to your body. Focus on the pull in your butt and hamstrings. Once you've bent as far forward as comfortable, wait a beat, then slowly return to the starting position. Do ten to twelve repetitions.



THAT'S A STRETCH

If you're thinking of testing your newly rebuilt legs out on the field during the homecoming reunion, be careful of the ever-treacherous thigh, hamstring and groin injuries that often occur during even recreational sports. Scott Duke, a New York sports chiropractor, suggests the following stretches to keep your legs from blowing out in the big game. Repeat each one three times.

HAMSTRING STRETCH: Kneel with your right knee on the ground and your left leg straight in front of you. Now flex the toes on your left foot toward your head and fold your body forward at the waist, leaning into the left leg. Hold for up to fifteen seconds, then repeat on the other side.



THIGH STRETCH: Kneel, with your right knee on the ground, and lunge your left leg forward, keeping your knee directly over your ankle. Grab your right ankle and gently pull it toward your butt as you lunge forward. (If you're not that flexible, you may loop a towel around the right ankle to pull it properly.) Hold for up to fifteen seconds, then repeat with legs reversed.

GROIN STRETCH: Sit with the bottoms of your feet touching each other just in front of your groin. Your knees should be a few inches off the ground. Keeping your feet frozen, push your knees apart and down. Hold for up to fifteen seconds.



There's the Rub

A good massage can make you healthier—in body and mind.

BY CHERYL DELLA PIETRA

From the *How Times Have Changed* File: used to be that getting a massage meant you were either going to the red-light district for a quickie or that some brute named Helga was coming over to beat the crap out of you. But these days, therapeutic massage is no longer strictly a luxury for CEOs and bored tennis

wives. Now you can find therapists at the gym, in private practice and, increasingly in this age of perks, at the office.

Why get one? Put it this way: not getting a massage is like not having sex; you don't know what you're missing until you've had it. And like that other activity, it's addictive. Aside from the obvious relaxation benefit—when you're sitting at your desk following a massage, your veins are still working out, reducing tension and stress—massage also improves the immune system by recirculating blood.



LOOKING GOOD

All of which justifies the price, generally between \$60 and \$90 for an hour, depending upon whether you get pricey oils, nice scented candles and Kenny G on the CD player. A house or office call by a licensed therapist will usually cost upwards of \$100.

While there are many different styles of massage, three are most common: Swedish, deep-tissue and shiatsu.

Swedish is the most popular type. It's a basic set of strokes performed with lubrication directly on the muscles, which increases circulation, breaks down adhered tissue and reduces stress. It can also help chronic pain and muscle fatigue.

If you can stand it, a deep-tissue massage can be a life-affirming experience. It's a lot more intense (OK, it feels like someone's digging a hole in your back), but its effects last longer. The deeper strokes reach more layers of muscle, so the results

are typically greater. You'll feel unwound for days.

Conversely, shiatsu is a more energizing form of massage. Here, a therapist assesses which of your body's energy pathways, or "meridians," are out of balance, and then stretches and applies pressure on muscles (while you are fully clothed, and without oils) to allow energy to move more freely. Yes, it's a little out there. But when was the last time you felt energized?

Of course, massage gets even more specific: reflexology involves reflex zones on the feet and hands; craniosacral

GET THE MESSAGE

The field of massage is expanding faster than Dom DeLuise's waistline. So how can you tell a quality therapist from a hack with two oily hands? Follow these guidelines from the American Massage Therapy Association (www.amtamassage.org). Its Web site also has a locator, to find a therapist near you. —C.D.P.

- ♦ Only 29 states and the District of Columbia regulate massage therapy. If your state's regulated, check if your therapist is licensed by calling your state licensing board. Additionally, the well-respected National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (www.ncbtmb.com) offers private certification—sort of a CPA for massage therapists. To find out if your therapist has it, call the NCBTMB at 800-296-0664.

- ♦ Pick a therapist with at least 500 hours of training from an accredited program.

- ♦ Ask your therapist if he or she belongs to a credible professional association. The AMTA, for example, requires its members to have met standards for training and to uphold a strict code of ethics.

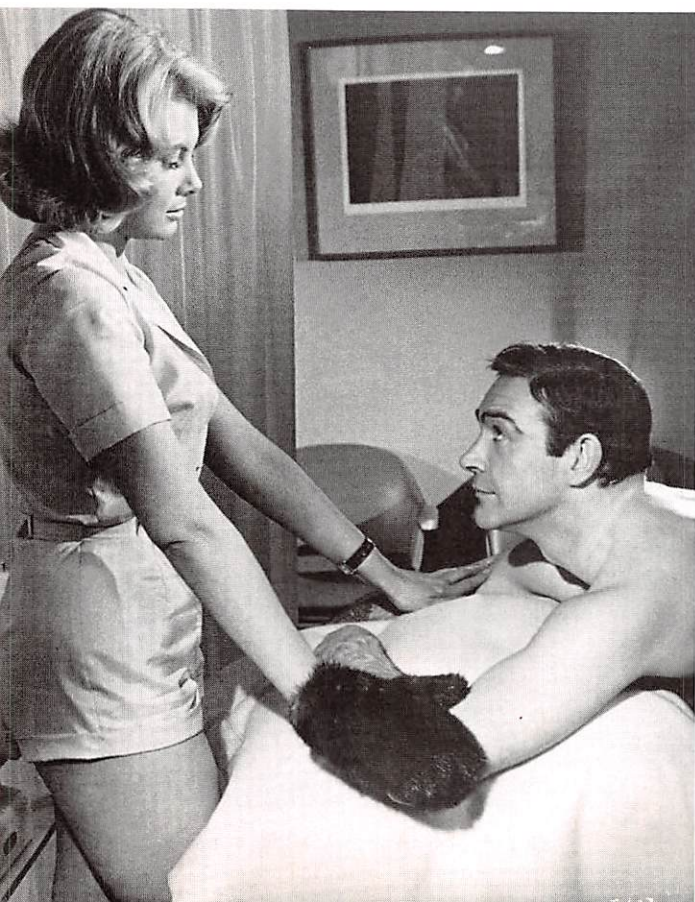
- ♦ No matter how qualified a therapist may be, he or she may not perform the type of massage you want. Ask about their specific techniques and tell them what results you're looking for.

- ♦ The best way to find a good therapist is through referral. Your chiropractor or regular doctor is a good choice for a recommendation.

alters the flow of cerebrospinal fluid, to help reduce chronic pain; polarity therapy balances negative and positive energy flows.

It may all sound frivolous, but there are tangible benefits here: a more relaxed you means a more productive you. Massage can also help relieve pain from such workplace hazards as carpal tunnel syndrome, sciatica and other I-sit-at-mytragically-nonergonomic-desk-all-day maladies. "It's a chance to take an hour out of your day and do absolutely nothing and shut down," says Geoffrey Dawe, an instructor at New York's Swedish Institute and massage therapist to U.S. Open tennis players. "Studies have shown that when corporations do that, workers are more productive." Which gives a whole new meaning to lying down on the job.

Much to her fiancé's delight, Cheryl Della Pietra, a former P.O.V. research editor, is currently studying to become a licensed massage therapist.



Her Cheatin' Heart

Think she'll play with other boys on the block while she's living with you? **TOMMY LEONARDI** and

SHERI DE BORCHGRAVE debate the virtues of the less-than-virtuous.



I'm about to marry a woman whom I began dating while she was still involved with another man. Suddenly, I'm having a crisis of trust because I'm afraid that she'll betray me someday, like she did the man before me. Is my fear justified? —Tormented Tony

HE SAYS: Although I can see why you might be suspicious of her for having cheated on the man before you, you shouldn't judge her by that failed relationship—or by her past track record, for that matter. It sounds easier said than done, but I've seen



LOVE & SEX

many a tiger change their proverbial stripes—despite their prior transgressions—once they found the person

with whom they want to share the rest of their lives.

Basically, you have two choices: One, try to believe her and live with the stress of never knowing what she's actually doing when you're not around. Or two, you can find out—before you marry her—how faithful she will be.

I know this sounds horrible, and I usually don't encourage playing games in relationships, but in this case I think an exception may be in order, because your situation requires assurance that will affect the rest of your life. So, the next time you and your fiancée attend an event or a party with at least a hundred people, try this: The day after the party, arrange to have a friend or acquaintance (someone she doesn't know) who's her type call her, tell her that he saw her at the party last night and that he is very attracted to her. The key here is for him to admit that he noticed she was with a man he presumed to be her boyfriend, and then make it clear that it doesn't matter to him. Then, have him drop the bomb and ask her out and see what she says.

If she agrees to meet him, you'll know that your fears may be legit. Bye-bye, bride. But if she turns him down, you should start believing her when she says that she has no desire to cheat on you, and get on with your life together.

With all of the uncertainty surrounding any relationship, one thing is for sure: if you don't learn to trust her, your relationship will fail. Guaranteed.

SHE SAYS: Before you start doubting your fiancée's fidelity, remember that *you* got involved with her when she was dating someone else—and proceeded to take her away from another man. Do you presume you were an innocent bystander when that relationship was destroyed? Granted, you weren't the "cheater" in that triangle. But you were involved, nonetheless.

Should you trust her? That's a difficult question from either side of the gender fence. Universally, most people establish pat-

terns of behavior that they repeat throughout their lives. That's why we're forever attracting and dating the same types—and having déjà vu relationships and breakups. Then, along comes someone special who seems to break the chain, right all the wrongs and put your life in order. If that's what your fiancée has done for you, then you shouldn't judge her by her past. Instead, focus on how she is with you today.

There is one major warning sign, however: if your fiancée seems happy, but is constantly trying to change your behavior, turn you from frog to prince, she's got *Pygmalion* complex. If she's not satisfied with you now, it'll only get worse, and eventually lead to her looking out for a new tadpole to kiss. Remember, she left someone else for *you* be-

cause she was obviously tired of him. Check the forecast. If it looks like stormy weather ahead, you need to confront her and tell her how you feel.

Best-case scenario: she's still attracted to you, she doesn't try to change you and she doesn't look at other men (to the best of your knowledge). Chances are you're the man she's been looking for and she's yours for the long haul. You have to go with your instincts here, and trust yourself. Then, you must learn to trust her.



Tommy Leonard and Sheri de Borchgrave are P.O.V.'s under-the-sheets experts. Questions? E-mail to sex@povmag.com, or write to 56 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10010, Attn: Love & Sex. Names/addresses will be kept confidential.



Model Behavior

If you want to impress Laura, you better call Mom, make eye contact and never tell her she "looks like a model."

Laura, 21, is a professional dancer from St. Louis.

What can you tell about a man by his clothing?

When I see a sophisticated dresser—which means no jeans, but slacks and a button-down shirt—I can assume he has a career and has his life together. I like a well-groomed man who looks professional.

Have you ever heard an original pickup line?

Pickup lines don't surprise me because I've heard everything: "Have I seen you before?"; "Are you in a magazine?"; "You're beautiful, you must be a model"—that one's almost like an insult to me in a strange way, because I feel like he's stereotyping and saying that's all I can do if I'm attractive.

Why aren't men more successful picking up women in bars?

The problem with men in bars and clubs is that they tend to mob groups of women. They are way too pushy—they ask to buy you a drink or come to dance with you and don't understand the concept of "no." Often men won't take no for an answer and keep trying to hit on women. The whole concept of saying "no" means that I don't want to be approached by you anymore.

Then what works on a cold approach?

The key to approaching any woman is making eye contact before coming over to talk to her. If she makes eye contact with you, the interest is established first and you won't have to wonder if you're bothering her when she wants to be left alone. I also enjoy those few moments as he's approaching. It's a fun game to have those five seconds to make impressions and wonder what he's like. If you can't make eye contact, sort of mingle into the scene around her area and find

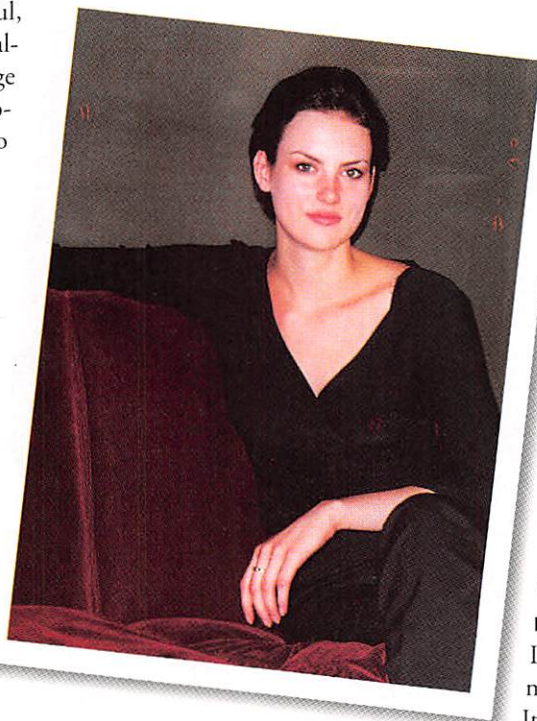
a subtle way to get her attention. Once you've started a conversation, establish common interests. I enjoy a conversation with sarcasm and humor. It helps to keep it going and makes the clichéd bar conversation more interesting. I'll want to see a guy again who has a sense of humor and with whom I had a lighthearted conversation. He'll stick in my head.

After he gets your number, how long should a guy wait to call?

Ideally, I'd like him to call a day or so after. If he calls earlier, I'll think he's interested and he's thinking about the possibility of things developing with us—calling later means I'm just another number in his pocket.

Should he give up if he fumbles the first impression?

I dated a guy who made a bad first impression. He was even rude at first. Eventually we had a really nice conversation and decided to go out. I guess all that negative energy turned into attraction.



Do you expect more creativity than a dinner date?

I'm not put off by the dinner date. I like a date that involves dinner, then a drink somewhere else. Of course he gets points if he can be more creative, but I think it's hard to be original with a date. Sporting events are always fun—a hockey or basketball game. Once, I even went on a dinner-and-a-massage date (we had separate rooms) that was memorable, if strange.

What is something that a man may not know is impressive?

I like it when a guy shows attachment to his family or family interest. It's nice when he asks me how my parents are or tells me he called his mom. I think that shows he's got a good home life and adds a nice aspect to his personality.

When you spend a holiday dinner with a boyfriend, what do you expect his role to be?

I guess I'm traditional in the Midwestern sense and wouldn't expect him to help in the kitchen. It's fine with me if he's out watching football—I'd just like him to help clean up.